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Sarkaria Commission: A Vote For Statusquo

H.G. Deshpande

While the report of the Sarkaria Commission was submitted at the end of October 1987, it is only now that a brief summary of what it says has been published. It is understood that the Commission itself did not prepare a summary. This was on the ground that a summary more or less discourages people from going to the original text and, in this process, a good deal is lost. Therefore, the Commission submitted a long report and left it to the government to prepare a summary in case it so preferred. Likely enough, the full text would become available only after some time.

Going by the summary that has appeared in the Press, one thing is clear. The Commission has opted for streamlining the system rather than restructuring it. This is not to say that restructuring was on the agenda. Considering the fact, however, that the Commission was appointed in the context of the controversy that had arisen in Punjab and that, three years later, the Rajiv-Longowal accord referred the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to the Commission, it may be said that restructuring was one of the issues under consideration. Evidently, the Commission has decided against it. As could have been predicted, the Akalis have protested against it. But protests from other sources are marginal. Even opposition states, like West Bengal and Karnataka, which had pleaded for greater powers to the states have been, by and large, passive in their

response. To this extent the Commission had a surer feeling of the political reality than its critics might be inclined to credit it with.

Distortions

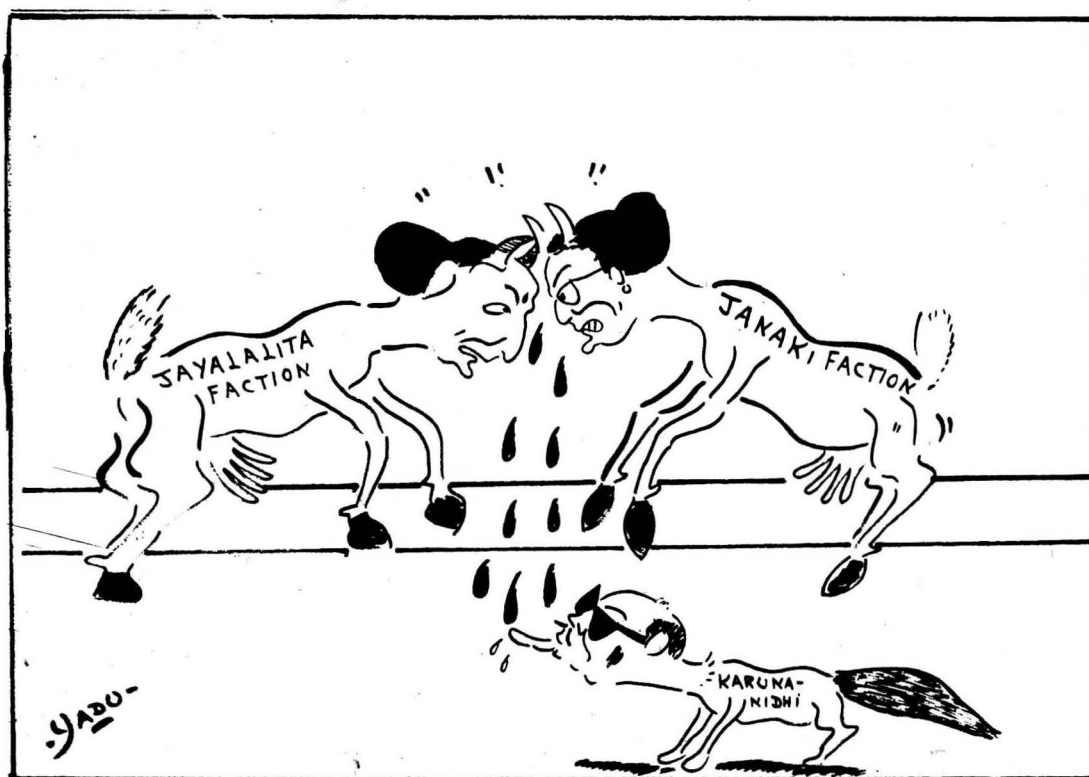
Clearly, what the Commission has done is to take note of some of the distortions that had crept into the system over the years. In regard to a large number of them, what the Commission has done is to suggest changes and modifications of a kind which would take care of the distortions and irritations and leave the structure intact. For instance, in regard to the power of the Centre to supersede a State government, the Commission has not decided against it. What it has done is to

seek to regulate the system in such a way that the power vested in the Centre is not misused

The same can be said in regard to the appointment and role of the Governor, the appointment and transfer of

judges, fiscal relations between the Centre and the states and a dozen other things. In respect

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Speculations on Punjab

K. S. Khosla

Mr. Badal clarified.

Mr. Badal made these demands (the fifth demand relates to the rehabilitation of Army deserters) after his release from detention on December 2 last and since then he is on tour of the State organising 'dhamas' at district levels against "repression" and for mobilising public support for his demands. Reports coming from districts say that the public response to his meeting is very good.

Two reasons are given for the renewed political activity in the State. First, the possibility of the Prime Minister holding such a meeting and secondly, possibility of elections after the second term of the President's rule expires on May 11 next. All this is in the realm of possibility but the hope of coming back to power and getting credit for decisions which the Centre alone can take is the spur of political resurgence.

Congress (I) Policy

A sea-change has come in the policy of the State Congress(I) which hitherto had been insisting that no

The remarks of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, on board the plane on his return journey from Stockholm that he would discuss the proposal to hold an all-party meeting to discuss the Punjab problem with his cabinet colleagues has sparked a lot of speculation in political circles here.

No one knows when the all-party meeting will be called, or whether it will be held at all, but at least four major political parties in the State are working overtime to come out with statements welcoming the proposal. There is, however, a catch in their statements as the overriding motive behind these moves is to pressurise the Centre not to give credit to the United Akali Dal led by Mr. Parkash Singh Badal for the political initiative.

These parties including the Congress (I), the CPI, the CPM and the Akali Dal (L) are now agreed that some of the major irritants like the non acceptance of the demands for release of Jodhpur detenus, punishment of those responsible for the killing of

Sikhs in november 1984, repeal of black laws and putting an end to fake encounters by the police should be removed before calling such a meeting.

Not Bright

The possibility of a political dialogue seem not to be bright as Mr. Badal has since rejected the suggestion on the ground that the Centre must first accept his five demands to reestablish its credibility with the Sikh masses. The chances of acceptance of all the five demands are remote as the Union Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh, has reiterated that a dialogue can be started only when the Akalis condemn the militants and their demand for Khalistan. Mr. Badal has said that they were against terrorism and as regards the demand for Khalistan "it is not my party's demand or programme." Further, his party's demand or programme "Further, his party stood for peaceful agitation for the acceptance of these demands and also the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution,

negotiations should held until terrorism was wiped out from the State. In fact, the recent mass contact campaign of the State Congress(I) led by Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, General Secretary of AICC (I) was directed towards this end and for influencing public opinion against terrorism. Both the State Congress(I) and the State Congress(I) Legislature Party have come out with statements which, while accusing Mr. Badal of abetting terrorism, want the Centre to remove some of the irritants in the way of the Punjab settlement. These statements from the ruling party's unit in Punjab give credence to reports that the Centre is about to take political initiative. Dr. Kewal Krishan, General Secretary of the State Congress(I), is emphatic that Mr. Badal should not be given credit for removing the irritants and opening a dialogue.

In fact, the Congress(I) Legislature Party has decided to call on the Prime Minister to urge him to sort out the Punjab problem. At a meeting of the Legislature Party a few days ago, some of the leaders were very forthright in their views, which is rare among Congressmen unless they have an assenting nod from Delhi. Some of the leaders said that

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Cartoons of the Fortnight

JASPAL BHATTI



The Government is urgently reviewing the cases of Jodhpur detainees but I cannot say how long it will take to complete the review.

I understand, Sir. After all, it is a government job.

Tribune



Telegraph

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NEWSHOUND

AFTER DISMISSING BARNALA THE
PUNJAB VIOLENCE HAS INCREASED!
WE MUST AGAIN
DISMISS SOMEONE!



Sound and Fury

I am a Marxist, and Marxists are pragmatic; they do not build castles in the air.

Jyoti Basu

Either Rajiv is raw or he is in the hands of the RAW.

The Muslim (Islamabad)

There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature.

Mikhail Gorbachev

Few men of wisdom join politics.

Zail Singh

Our Prime Minister has become a picnic minister

DMK MP V. Gopalaswamy, on Rajiv Gandhi's foreign trips

I will retire from politics only after I ensure Mr. Gandhi retires. With such a Prime Minister, no one can save India from ruin.

Jyoti Basu

Rajiv's mother never succeeded in harming me, what can this boy do

Devi Lal

I am interested in every man who's available. Where are they?

Rekha

God is the only real Communist in the world—

Mithun Chakraborty

When the sunrises in the morning, it gives a gentle glow. When it sets in the evening, it gives a bigger glow—

Zail Singh, on his retirement

J.N. Dixit is the Indian viceroy in Sri Lanka—

Anura Bandaranaike

Mr Gandhi is a pilot and he needs a control tower. He is always looking for directions—

Chandra Shekhar

This is a country which believes in tyag, giving up. If Rajiv Gandhi steps down, he may be brought back—

Vijayalakshmi Pandit

I am not happy about my release—

Prakash Singh Badal

Congressmen would have discarded Mrs Indira Gandhi had she been alive...She too might have appeared too old for the youngsters who run the party now—

Jyoti Basu

I respect Jyoti Basu even though we do not see eye to eye on Gorkhaland. He is perhaps the best chief minister in the country—

Subhas Ghising



Times of India

By Rap

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHOSE
IS THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE PUNJAB MESS?



- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality for Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

Tamas— for or Against

There is a joke current on the campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and it may well be referred to here. There is a point about it.

There has been a power breakdown in different parts of northern India particularly the city of Delhi, during the last few fortnight or so. On one particular Saturday when Tamas was to be telecast, there was no power anywhere on the JNU Campus. One of the teachers is reported to have remarked that the power breakdown must have been arranged by the BJP. The JNU teachers are said to be left-inclined and the BJP had only a couple of days earlier staged a demonstration outside the headquarters of Doordarshan against the screening of Tamas.

This incidental remark illustrates how people have taken up positions in regard to the TV serial Tamas. Some are for it, others are against it. According to a survey conducted in Bombay, a substantial number of people are for it. But perhaps the survey was rather unrepresentative. To poll a small number of people and in only one town and that also in one of the regions of the country cannot be taken to be a reliable indicator of public opinion. The only fair thing that one can say is that public opinion is divided. Some are for it and some are against it.

What is the point at issue? On the basis of the first two instalments, it was assumed that the story was anti-Hindu. The subsequent instalments have somewhat changed the focus of perception. In a press interview the author, Bhisham Sahni has explained that he has been misunderstood. Whether he is misunderstood or not will depend upon the perceptions of people. As far as the author is concerned, his is an imaginative reconstruction of the tragic events of 1947. There would be people who would not agree with the author's perception. But the point about any imaginative attempt to reconstruct history is not that we get the truth of history but that we acquire a kind of sensitivity which we did not possess earlier.

1947 was a tragic disaster. The partition of the country did not solve any problem. Earlier, the two communities were at logger head with each other. After 1947, confrontation got raised to the level of two sovereign states which are with deadly weapons and are not only in a position to confront each other but have actually engaged in combat on several occasions. There would have been some point about partition if it had settled the issue once and for all. Nothing of the kind happened and the confrontation between the two communities still continues.

It is about this basic issue that we have to think. If the screening of Tamas can make us think about this issue deeply and honestly, it would have served its purpose. But if some of us have already made up our minds and are not prepared to re-examine our assumptions that would be a pity indeed.

While it is true that partition came about because of the dubious role of the British Government in projecting and supporting Jinnah, we must also consider the related question: where did Jinnah draw his Basic strength from? Confrontation between Hinduism and Islam has gone on for almost a thousand years in India. What happened in 1947 was yet another turn in that confrontation. The thing to vote is that this confrontation has to be ended but it has not ended even after 1947.

To hold the Muslims alone responsible for the partition of the country is not correct beyond a point. Those who talk in this vein must also at the same time be able to explain why are the Muslims in India under pressure even today and why there are riots like Bhiwandi and Meerut and so on. The majority of Muslims, even those who stayed behind after 1947 might have supported the establishment of Pakistan. But once it was established, the situation underwent a change. Has this change been translated into practical politics? Had that happened, it would have been a different story altogether. The fact of the matter is that the pre-1947 mode of thinking still continues to haunt Indian polity.

The events of the last few years have done little to bring the two communities together, the current controversy about the Ram Janam Bhoom and the Babri Masjid is an example of it. It should not be necessary to go into the details of this controversy or how it should be settled. One thing is clear, however, the controversy has arisen because of the inflamed state of Hindu opinion in the country. It is this very state of mind which is also felt upset at the telecast of Tamas.

This state of mind is not healthy by any means. It is neither healthy for the future of Hinduism in the country nor for coexistence between Hindus and Muslims. Unlike Pakistan, where the number of Hindus left now is very small, India has the unique opportunity of evolving a polity wherein all citizens are equal and respect one another and believe in coexistence. In theory, hardly any one quarrels with it. In practice we are far from accepting this ideal. The controversy about Tamas is a case in point.

Achievement of Badshah Khan

What is often Ignored about him

Amrik Singh

The death of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan at the age of 98 has evoked emotion all over India. As acknowledged by everybody, he was the last survivor of the drama of independence and partition. With his death, a link has been snapped and this is the fact which evoked emotion.

Tributes have been paid to him in ample measure by all kinds of people. His achievement was so immense that whatever we might say about him is likely to fall short of what he stood for and what he accomplished. It is not intended to repeat some of the things said about him by a large number of perceptive observers. That is not even necessary. But it is necessary to call attention to some of those aspects of his achievement which, for the most part, have been ignored.

Social Reformer

Most often, notice is usually taken of his political career. But there is another important aspect of the man which by and large remains unnoticed. Basically he was a social reformer. In the kind of situation in which he operated, his involvement in political life became unavoidable and that is why it is his political role which is often commented upon and his achievement as a social reformer is either not noticed or, as happens so often, goes by default.

Those who know something about his work and achievement amongst the Pathans would bear testimony to this statement. He did not put forward any new or innovative ideas. In that respect he can not be described as a thinker or originator. But basically he was a man of God and believed in all those values which characterise such men. Above all, he was a man who had conquered fear. Nothing could daunt him and there was no way in which any kind of persuasion or power could deflect him from the path that he had chosen for himself. More than anything else, it was this freedom from fear which attracted him to Gandhi and bound the two together.

It is difficult to think of another two men in 20th century India who were more akin to each other than Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan. The bond between them was that they both believed in a set of ethical values and in pursuit of them refused to be put off the track by all those things to which the rest of us are subject. Both these men had overcome greed for money or power. Neither of them could be won over or influenced by any considerations other than what they considered to be right and proper.

Two incidents illustrate the relationship between the two. In the early '30s when the two had occasion to spend sometime

with each other, one of the things that Gandhi said to Ghaffar Khan was rather touching. He recalled his close relationship with the Ali Brothers in the early '20s and expressed his sadness at the way Gandhi and they had got estranged from each other. In other words, Gandhi was wary about this new relationship.

Ideal of Service

In his response Ghaffar Khan made it clear that what bound the two together was the ideal of service to others. As long as both of them believed in that

Ghaffar Khan this was a lesson in practical politics. Over the preceding decades he had been able to convince his followers, the Red Shirts as they were called, to accept non-violence as their guiding philosophy.

If there are two communities in India which have actually practised non-violence, it was the Akalis during the years 1920-25 and the Pathans in the early '30s. While the Akalis were unable to sustain that momentum beyond a few years, the Pathans were able to sustain it for a much longer



ideal, there was no question of their drifting apart from each other. It should not be necessary to comment upon this exchange between these two men who respected each other and had mutual esteem and affection.

The ideal of service bound the two together but where Ghaffar Khan learnt from Gandhi was the latter's unwavering belief in non-violence. Most people equate non-violence with lack of courage. Gandhi repeatedly argued and proved it through his conduct that the contrary was true. Non-violence was the highest form of courage he affirmed. These were not empty words as far as he was concerned. He lived by this belief and, without exaggeration, died with this belief.

Non-violence

A second interchange between these two great men illustrates the point at issue. On a visit to the North-West Frontier of India, Ghaffar Khan provided armed guards outside the place where Gandhi was staying. Gandhi objected to this arrangement and the guards were withdrawn. Even for

period. In fact, his followers functioned like a disciplined army. In 1947, for instance, when life had become insecure for non-Muslims in NWFP and there were a few stray killings in Peshawar, he instructed his followers to guard the city. 10,000 or more of them immediately obeyed orders and there was hardly any killing after that. Here was a man who had a clear vision of things and was firm in his resolve and nothing by way of intimidation or coercion could deflect him from the path that he had chosen himself.

Two further things require to be referred to here. Gandhi was both a thinker and a doer. Ghaffar Khan, however, was a doer rather than a thinker. In Gandhi's writings there is so much of philosophical reflection. He had views about a whole variety of things, including political and economic issues that faced the country. In every sense of the term he was multi-dimensional. Ghaffar Khan, however, was made differently. Early in life he set for himself an ideal and he lived and died for it.

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A Vote For Status Quo

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of each one of them, the Commission has made suggestions which, if implemented, would certainly help to improve the functioning of the polity and bring about a more wholesome relationship between the Centre and the states than exists today.

What the Commission has overlooked is one basic fact, however. All these distortions occurred because the ruling party which had governed the country for almost two decades without any challenge developed an incapacity to renew its mandate, as it should have done, and instead resorted to all kinds of manipulations in order to stay in power. As the Commission has itself noted, most instances of misuse occurred after Indira Gandhi came to power. This was owing to two reasons.

One was her own make-up which was not above resorting to such subterfuges. Secondly, the political imperatives were such that either she could follow what was laid down in the Constitution and go out of office or she could bend it in her favour so as to stay in office. She opted for the latter course. In doing so she hurt the Constitution badly. Not only that, the relationship between the Centre and the states began to deteriorate. It deteriorated to such an extent that, coupled with a few other developments, a situation arose in which she was left with no choice except to play for time. This is what explains the appointment of the Sarkaria Commission.

As one can see, the Commission has played the game in so far as it has not voted for any kind of restructuring. What it has done is to make suggestions which, if implemented honestly would certainly put the relationship between the Centre and the state on a more even keel. How far it will help in the long run is another question and, perhaps, the more important one.

Political Processes

This is said not because there

is any danger to the unity or the integrity of the country. But within those parameters, there are all kinds of strains. Some of them are visible and others are in the process of becoming visible. The country has to be strong and united. As far as this issue is concerned, there cannot be more than one opinion. But the relationship between the Centre and the states is a matter which admits of a variety of approaches and modes of interaction. What the Commission has done is not to touch this issue because once touched there was no knowing where it would lead to.

In any event, these issues will be decided not through Commissions but through the operation of political process. At the moment, it is far from wholesome. It remains to be seen whether another alternative party can emerge in the country so as to challenge the ruling party today. In fact, the real source of disquiet is the fact that the ruling party is in a state of dissolution. It may take quite some years before it disintegrates but the process of dissolution appears to be inexorable. It has been at work for a couple of decades and may take even another decade or so. The real source of weakness in Indian polity comes from this impending shift of political power and, for obvious reasons the Commission cannot do anything about it.

The Sarkaria Commission has side stepped these issues, as it very well might. But how can the Commission explain its attitude in regard to the control of the electronic media? Its verdict in favour of the status quo damns it in no unambiguous terms and reveals more than it hides. Enlightened opinion in the country is opposed to the existing situation but the Sarkaria Commission has failed to suggest an alternative. In fact, it has not seriously proposed any alternative. Need one say anything more by way of an indictment?

Speculations on Punjab

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the only difference between now and May last when the Barnala Ministry was dismissed was that the Akali ministry was helping terrorists but the number of killing of innocent persons had increased much more during the President's rule. Dr. Kewal Krishan went to the extent of saying that if Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala could order the police to enter the Golden Temple, what prevented the Ray-Rebeiro administration from doing so.

There has also been a change in the assessment of the situation by the State Congress(I) leaders. They no longer view the Punjab tangle as only a law and order problem. This is also the view of

the Ray-Rebeiro administration, though it does not want to say it publicly. Both the Governor, Mr. S.S. Ray and the Police Chief, Mr. J.F. Rebeiro, have urged the Centre to take political initiative. According to them, the best time to do so was last November when the terrorists were on the run. A great opportunity has been lost, they say in private.

Communist Parties

The Statement of the State Congress(I) has come in the wake of resolutions passed by the two communist parties, the CPI and the CPM. Both the parties have urged the Centre to take a bold decision to reach a consensus. To

defuse the situation, these parties want the government to release the Jodhpur detenues, punish the guilty of the November 1984 killings and implementation of the Punjab accord. These parties say that "Punjab is a national problem and the government should take initiative on these issues at once without giving credit to any political party." The Communist leaders want the Prime Minister to act like a statesman and rise above party interests.

The Akali Dal(L) is not far behind in making these demands to defuse the situation but where it weakens its position is its further demand

for the restoration of popular rule. This desire to come to power again does not go well with the hurt psyche of the Sikhs. Where Mr. Badal has stolen a march over Mr. Barnala is that he says that he does not want power. All that he wants is to serve the Sikh 'qaum' and remove its sense of hurt and restore its honour.

Another reason for the change in perception is that the tough policy against terrorists have not yielded the desired result. The CPI is the only party which has launched a frontal campaign against terrorists. The State Congress(I) woke up quite late but even then its mass contact drive to mobilise public

opinion against terrorism has not evoked the expected response. Its meetings were attended by one hundred to 500 persons at the most. Further, these meetings were used mostly for criticising the Akalis and where the Akalis too were invited to speak, the outcome was mutual mud-slinging.

So the ball is now in the Centre's court. The big question is will the Congress(I) at the Centre take the political initiative to solve the Punjab problem in view of the impending general elections? Everyone is waiting with bated breath.



Muni Sushil Chandra's meeting with Prof Darshan Singh also raised hopes at one time.

Badshah Khan

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His Contribution

In terms of sheer suffering and sacrifice, he had a much greater share of it than falls to the lot of most men including Gandhi. As so many people say, Gandhi died at a moment when his death saved him from being a helpless witness to all the coarseness and corruption that were to overtake the country. Ghaffar Khan was not so fortunate. He survived for another four decades and when one comes to think of it, those were tragic years. For half the time after 1947 he was in jail. Even when he was not in jail he was checkmated at every step. In terms of achievement there was very little that he could claim.

Perhaps, his most durable contribution lies in the womb of the future. He gave a sense of pride to the Pathans. That they are divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan is an accident of history. It was not given to him to undo that accident but he certainly has left behind a legacy of pride and self-respect

in the Pathan community which may one day lead to a distinct social transformation in that part of the world. Should that come about, and it is difficult to say if it will, Badshah Khan would have accomplished something after his death that he could not accomplish in his own life.

There are many lessons to be learnt from the life of this simple and sincere man. Perhaps the most important of them is the courage to stand by his convictions and it was this bond more than any other which drew him and Gandhi together. Not many people are prepared to acknowledge the fact that if any one followed Gandhi it was he. Not even Vinoba Bhave who is so often thought of as having carried forward the tradition started by Gandhi can be described as having the deep humanity which characterised the work and conduct of this simple, for fearing man. It would be no exaggeration to say that he is one of the immortals of this sub continent.

Incidence of Iodine Deficiency Disorders 30% in Delhi-

Chief Executive Councillor Delhi Shri Jag Parvesh Chandra said here on 18 Jan. that Goitre has been an age old problem. Recent extensive studies have shown that Goitre is not a problem confined to the hilly regions but has a large magnitude involving practically the entire country. To solve this gigantic problem the efforts being made by technocrats and bureaucrats have now been fully backed by the political will as endemic goitre has been included in the new 20 Point Programme, he added.

Shri Chandra was speaking at a "Workshop on Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme in Delhi organised by the Delhi Administration in collaboration with the UNICEF. Shri Bansi Lal Chauhan, Executive Councillor (Health) presided over the function.

It has been estimated that 30% population of Delhi is suffering from the various aspects of Iodine Deficiency Disorders and, therefore, efforts to combat the problem of this magnitude have to be made on a war footing.

Khalistan Phobia: Tragedy of Error

The Punjab imbroglio now seems to be farther away from solution than it was in 1984 when operation Bluestar was undertaken. Today it appears that *ad hocism* has taken control of the Central Government in such a severe manner that it is acting like a blind man looking for black cows in darkness. I had gone with Baba Amte to Punjab and we have recently returned having spent nearly a month on this eighth visit. During all our previous visits, we had always the impression that no one genuinely thought of "KHALISTAN"; majority never mentioned it, the lunatic fringe of extremists talked of it in ambiguous terms and the Sikhs as a whole knew and said that it would be against the interests of Sikhs themselves. And yet one heard of Khalistan much more in Govt. statements, in reaction to the mad acts of terrorists and in bigotted versions of what the extremists said or did.

However, it was all the time evident that the hurt among the Sikhs was tremendous and apart from Bluestar, Woodrose and Delhi anti-Sikh violence of Nov. 1984, continued incarceration of detenus in Jodhpur, some of whom were innocent pilgrims, had made a definite hole in the Sikh psyche about the credibility of the Central Government. Indeed the Mishra Commission's report on Delhi riots sprinkled salt on Sikh wounds and they began to feel even more doggedly that they could never expect justice from the present Government. What has never been understood is that this loss of credibility and this sense of injustice along with non-implementation of the Longowal-Rajiv Accord is the principal reason for the lunatic fringe of extremists to continue to have some sympathy among the Sikhs.

Fading Sympathy

This sympathy is fading not only because the extremists have, of late, made

no distinction between Hindus and Sikhs in terms of their killing spree, but also because they have menacingly challenged the established order of Sikh traditions. The Acting Akal Takht Jathedar, Prof. Darshan Singh who has stood steadfast in favour of national unity and integrity has been disowned by the militants who project themselves as Khalistanis. It is debatable whether the demand for Khalistan by these hotheads is more out of frustration and sense of injustice than a direct political demand, but the fact remains that the vast majority of the Sikhs detest this demand.

This is vouchsafed by most of the Administrative and Police highups who put the figure of those not in favour at 98%. Where the Central Government has been playing foolish not only with the ideal of SATYAMEV JAYATE, our country's symbol of Truth but also with national interest is the basic question of removing the irritants which leave the Sikhs distanced from the Government's credibility. The whole world knows and it has been proclaimed repeatedly by various national leaders that bullet-for-bullet can never be the answer in such a situation.

Indeed the Government cannot let the terrorists terrorise people and no one questions its authority to try to contain or eliminate them, but the methods used and the blind devotion to state violence and non-adherence to rule of law have been leading to creation of more and more extremists. It has been argued times without number that non-removal of irritants and state repression, on the one hand, makes the extremists and terrorists more determined to fight the "sense of injustice" and, on the other, leaves the Sikh masses bewildered. They are now under attack both from the terrorists and the Police.

Irritants

Tragic, as it might appear, is the fact that the Police themselves plead for removal of these irritants so that their job of containing terrorism becomes easier.

What I need stressing here is that the question is not of doing something for the Sikhs, but showing ourselves as a civilised Government. Amnesty International has already critically commented on the violation of human rights in respect of Jodhpur and other prisoners. No Government worth the name can call itself civilised and leave unpunished the perpetrators of massacres of Nov. 84. But the Government is dumb and mute. In order to show its ugly inaction, it beats the drum of Khalistan to silence the nation into acceptance of Government's *ad hocism*.

Strange is the fact that while the Central Government's instrument for containing terrorism is the Police which has not shown remarkable alacrity in its determination, it is the police itself which is being let down by the Central Government in not reducing the pressure on it by such acts which go to remove the sense of injustice. Now, there is almost a national consensus on the following among distinguished citizens of India on the following:

- (i) Release of innocent detainees and trial of others held in Jodhpur and other jails;
- (ii) Prosecution and punishment of criminals involved in anti-Sikh carnage in Nov. 84 in Delhi and elsewhere;
- (iii) Assurance, in practice, to the Sikhs living in other States in India so that we do not play into the hands of extremists who provoke communal disturbances.

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tional has already critically commented on the violation of human rights in respect of Jodhpur and other prisoners.

No Government worth the name can call itself civilised and leave unpunished the perpetrators of massacres of Nov. 84. But the Government is dumb and mute. In order to show its ugly inaction, it beats the drum of Khalistan to silence the nation into acceptance of Government's *ad hocism*.

The Phobia

KHALISTAN-phobia makes it possible for anti-Sikh voice to grow; the madness of senseless violence against innocent people from the extremists strengthens that voice while the state repression in terms of fake encounters and picking-up of innocent young-men gives a grist to the extremists' mill projecting themselves as the champions of Sikh rights. The Government wakes up from its slumber when there is a large scale killing and sleeps again after making some brave voices. The people continue to suffer-Hindus, Sikhs and others.

Now that there is some kind of courage welling up in the Sikh masses to throw away this burden of extremism their

Bhangwant Singh Dalawari

heads and they seem to be making some headway into loudly disowning the terrorists, the Central Government, in national interests, should announce the release of Jodhpur prisoners, remission of sentences of Army deserters and prosecution of Nov. 84 criminals. As it is, Government has succeeded in isolating the moderates instead of isolating the terrorists. Let the Government wake up even now and create a basis for the moderate Sikh opinion to exert itself and realise that if Operation Bluestar violated the sanctity of the Golden Temple, what is happening there today is no less than polluting the holiness of the shrine.

I sometimes wonder at the naivete or foolishness of the rulers. KHALISTAN will never come about; Sikhs themselves will be the great sufferers, if it came about. But I hate to think whether the rulers' insensitivity, political chicanery and party-power interests would not lead to a situation where KHALISTAN becomes a reality or where continued instability in the border state would become a permanent feature.

I still hope that we have not reached a point-of-no return and KHALISTAN projection is only frustration. It is time to find out political means to solve the problem in addition to fighting terrorism and it is TIME TO KNOW FROM THOSE WHO PROCLAIM THE DEMAND OF KHALISTAN THE EXTENT OF THEIR COMMITMENT. We do not have to do so after 20 years, when communal fabric has been totally destroyed. By all means fight terrorism but remove the hurts which fuel terrorism.

Bhagat Gurdas Mal Honoured



New Delhi. 31st January A vast Sikh congregation was elated and joyous at the moment when Bhagat Guradas Mal was presented a robe of honour by the Sangat at Gurdwara Nanak Piao on the G.T.Road. Bhagat ji as the devotees lovingly address him, has regularly enthused the devotees with his chaste recitals of the morning prayers in this historic Gurdwara for the last thirty three years. Present on the dias were Singh Sahib Prof. Darshan Singh Acting Jathedar Sri Akal Takht, Manjit Singh Calcutta General Secretary United Akali Dal, Jathedar Harcharan Singh President Delhi Akali Dal, and Jathedar Avtar Singh Hit. S.Ajit Singh President DUMPT co. presented the robe of honour on behalf of the congregation to Bhagat ji.



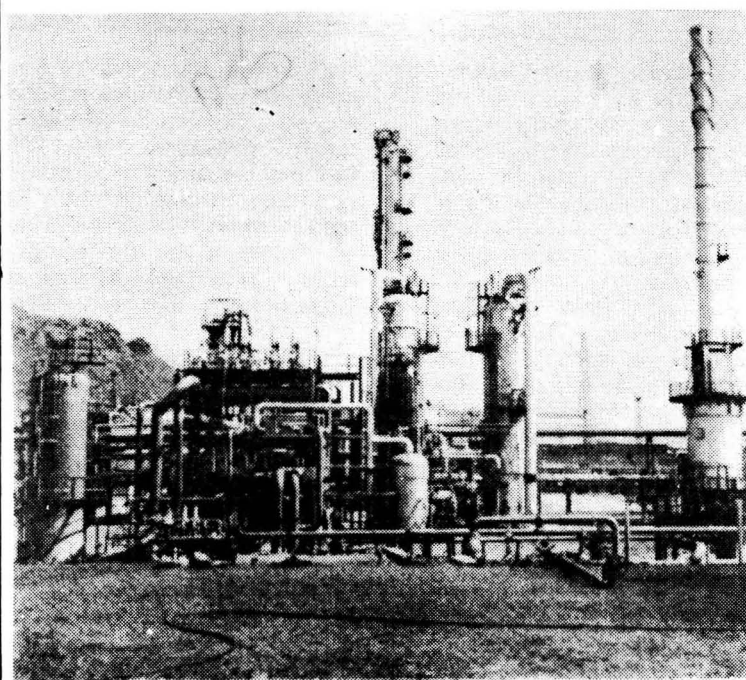
व्यवस्थापक,
संचेतना (मासिक)
एच-108, शिवाजी पार्क
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Return of Oil Multi nationals

FOUR contracts, for the leasing of off-shore blocks for the exploration and production of petroleum to international oil firms, have been entered into by the union government/Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) last month in New Delhi. Three separate contracts were entered into with the US consortium, Chevron-Texaco—two for the Krishna-Godavari off-shore block-I and VII and one for the Palar off-shore block-II, off the Andhra coast. The fourth contract was signed with the Canadian firm, International petroleum Corporation, for an off-shore block in the Krishna-Godavari basin, KG-OS-IV. The petroleum ministry is hopeful that more such contracts will be signed in the next few months for exploring oil in at least nine out of the 27 blocks which the government offered to foreign oil companies in what is called the third round of talks launched early in 1986 for the purpose. The first round in 1980 had attracted two American companies to two blocks out of 32 offered and the second in 1982 one company, Chevron (which is now back with another company in response to the third round) to explore one block out of 50 offered. The exploration of three blocks by foreign companies as a sequel to the first two rounds based on the oil-sharing principle to which the government of India was persuaded to agree after much hesitation proved to be infructuous and no oil was found. What results the latest contracts will produce is yet to be seen. Going by past experience, there must be a great deal of optimism, combined with gullibility, in the government for it to expect that foreign companies will find much-needed oil for India. The government, after the earlier two rounds, remained quiet for four years and the idea of inviting foreign oil companies once again was revived in 1986 when the trend in favour of inviting multinationals to India in general began to run high.

Starting from flat refusal to enter into oil-sharing arrangements with foreign oil companies for oil exploration in selected blocks, the government has moved a long way to meet the terms and conditions set by oil multinationals to return to India. According to the official press release, the contracts signed as a sequel to the third round of talks with foreign Oil companies lay down that while the entire exploration risk will be borne by the foreign companies, ONGC will come into the picture as their partner at the stage of extraction of crude oil after successful exploration and discovery "to the extent of 40 per cent and receive its corresponding share of petroleum". According to a report in Economic Political Weekly ONGC will not, therefore, be an equal but a minority partner of the foreign companies even at the stage of the production of oil discovered by the foreign companies. All the oil produced will, however,

be made available to the government but at international market prices and till India reaches the level of self-sufficiency. The government will also have a share in the crude oil produced, presumably in addition to the ONGC share, as a tax to be paid in kind on the profits of the foreign companies after the foreign companies have recovered all their costs, including exploration costs. This sharing is proposed to be on a sliding scale as a proportion of their profits as the economics of their projects improves. The foreign companies will, of course, have the option of terminating their contracts, as and when they consider appropriate, in the event of their exploration work not finding oil.



Multinationals' Entry Into Krishna-Godavari Basin

These terms and conditions for oil exploration by foreign companies would appear to be standard ones. The government has, in fact, gone as far as it could to be accommodating. There is no insistence on associating the ONGC with the exploration work of the foreign companies. That the contracts provide for separate agreements for transfer of technology and that selected personnel of ONGC will be associated with the exploration activity of foreign companies can be no substitute for partnership of ONGC with the foreign companies for the exploration of the blocks allotted to them. It can be assumed that transfer of knowledge and technology by the foreign companies to ONGC will be minimal under the contracted arrangements. There will also be no equal sharing of oil produced between ONGC and foreign companies and the ratio accepted is 40 per cent for ONGC and 60 per cent for the foreign companies. The foreign companies have indeed got away with the best of terms under the contracts. But this is not the only, or even the most important, gain that the foreign oil multinationals have secured. The clincher is the highly prospective blocks which they

have secured for exploration.

The move initiated in 1980 to invite foreign companies, including the notorious seven sisters of the international oil cartel, was itself a major turn-about in government policy on the work and activities of oil multinationals in India. The government had earlier found to its dismay that apart from the highly lucrative business of refining in India crude oil from their captive sources abroad, the oil majors were simply not interested in exploring and producing oil here. The government had to work hard and long for their ouster from India. When the government finally succeeded in this effort, it was hailed as a great achievement. The late K D

have been slackened, much less given up. On the contrary, the effort had to be intensified. It was this appreciation of the prospects of the Godavari basin which prompted reservation of this structure for exploration by ONGC in the earlier round of talks with the foreign companies. It was not included among the structures—on-shore and off-shore—which were offered to the foreign oil companies. ONGC, on its part, was fully geared for intensifying the exploratory effort on this structure. It merely asked that it be allowed to make purchases of more sophisticated equipment from abroad and engage suitable foreign expertise and consultancy services to back up its effort.

Considering this background, the rational course to take was at once to grant the request of ONGC and extend the necessary foreign exchange support for the purpose. But the government did not respond to the pleadings of ONGC. Instead it chose to 'pose' the project for oil exploration in the Krishna-Godavari basin to the World Bank for financing. The World Bank, on its part, took its own time in making an appraisal of the project before it would agree to the aid request. Meanwhile, pressure was mounted to hand over the project to oil multinationals. The IMF too stepped in with its conditionality clauses for its 5 billion SDR loan to India. The memorandum of assurances by the government included opening up of oil exploration in India to oil multinationals. In response to these pressures, the Krishna-Godavari structure, to begin with, was proposed to be bifurcated, retaining the part under shallow waters for ONGC to explore and handing over the part under deeper waters to the foreign companies. The companies, however, wanted ONGC to vacate the structures reserved for it—structures which could be handled by ONGC on its own. This has now come to pass. This strikingly falsifies the rationale of inviting foreign companies for oil exploration which is that only such of the structures which ONGC cannot tackle mind require the special technology and expertise of the foreign companies should be opened to them for exploration. But foreign oil companies have always pressed for prospective structures and not difficult ones and they have wanted to supplant ONGC to the extent they can rather than supplement the exploration effort of ONGC. The negotiations with oil multinationals have finally culminated in the latest contracts being signed on this basis.

It cannot have been fortuitous however, that the foreign companies have so consistently failed so far to discover oil in any of the basins and blocks allotted to them. The fact is that the discovery of oil for India has never fitted into the global business designs of the oil multinationals and it is doubtful that it does so even now. Moreover, oil business have always been closely mixed up

with politics and the military-political designs of the big powers. Thus the oil companies may accept blocks not so much to explore for oil as to collect data which may be of military-strategic significance to the countries of their origin or data for future use for oil discoveries as well when these suit their global business interests. Once they have collected such data to the extent they consider adequate at any particular round of their supposed exploration work, they just fold up and leave. This has happened again and again, including in the case of Chevron which did just this when it explored India's off-shore in 1983 and has now come back with Taxaco. The oil multinationals obviously have expertise in keeping much of the data they assemble at a minimum cost to themselves for their own use and very little of it is passed on to the host country. There is part of the Indian experience with the operations on-shore of foreign oil companies during the fifties and sixties and off-shore in the seventies and eighties. In the general orientation of official policy in favour of opening the doors wide for foreign capital and multinationals, however, these vital strategic and economic considerations have been simply ignored in the third round of talks with foreign oil companies.

At a function to celebrate the signing of the contracts with foreign companies, it was claimed that the petroleum ministry had scored a great victory which might well be rated on the same level as the achievements of the late K D Malaviya in developing India's national oil industry. In claiming to rival the work of K D Malaviya, however, what was missed by the cheering crowd was that Malaviya had fought doggedly the oil multinationals and ousted them from India, while they have now been invited back to India with far-reaching adverse implications for the growth of India's oil industry. The very idea that ONGC, together with Oil India, cannot be relied upon to find more oil and that India cannot do without foreign participation in oil exploration and production repudiates bractly the legacy of the late Malaviya. True oil men, nurtured in the Malaviya tradition, cannot possibly feel elated by the return of oil multinationals under the present administrative and political dispensation.

(From Economic and Political Weekly)



Enquiry into Sangrur Jail Killings

Three undertrial prisoners were killed as a result of police firing in "high-security" Sangrur jail on October 14, 1987 while a score of them, including Superintendent of Jail, were injured following what the police stated a "clash" and "rioting" by the inmates. The cause of the affray reported by the police was that the inmates wanted to meet Mr Gurdev Singh, a former head priest of Akal Takhat, who was shifted to that jail a few days earlier, even as the jail authorities had refused permission for such a meeting.

Since the shooting took place in judicial lock-up, the Punjab Human Rights Organisation considered it a grave matter. It, therefore, constituted a five-member committee of its activists to sift the truth after a detailed on-the-spot study. The members of the committee were Mr Gian Chand Leharaga, Mr Jatinder Singh Gill, an advocate of Sangrur, Mr Gurbhajan Singh Gill, a former Deputy Superintendent of Police, Punjab, who is an expert in holding enquiries, Mr Mohinder Singh Jawanda, a kisan leader and Mr Malwinder Singh Mali, coordinator of P.H.R.O.

The members of the enquiry committee met advocates, journalists, publicmen and jail and police department officers. These included Mr. Rajdev Singh Barnala, Mr. Narinder Singh Sidhu, Mr Sukhminder Singh Bhatti, advocates, and Lt Col H.S. Kahlon. The government officers whom the committee members met requested anonymity for fear of reprisals from the establishment.

Official Version

A few undertrials wanted to see Bhai Gurdev Singh but the request was turned down as per the jail rules. The interview was denied because the behaviour of the inmates was not good. The undertrials were agitated as a result of this refusal of interview. They did not hear Superintendent Jail, Gurcharan Singh Grewal. So an alarm was sounded when Wassan Singh, Jagdish Singh and Balwinder Singh assaulted the Superintendent and, after the jail warders and staffmen armed with rifles came in, they tried to snatch weapons from them. Other undertrials attacked the warders and guards with bricks and pipes injuring many of them. In self-defence, the warders fired upon the undertrials killing the above three and injuring others. The injured inmates and guards were provided medical aid immediately.

Committee's Findings

Sangrur Special Jail is one of the top security jails where the alleged Sikh terrorists are lodged. According to the practice, the premises regularly and without notice are searched so that the inmates do

not have access to any weapon or missile. Even small kirpans worn by the Sikh inmates are removed. No bricks or pipes can be allowed to be stored inside or near the jail barracks. The relations between the Superintendent and his deputy are far from cordial. Warders are also vertically divided into factions. There are frequent allegations that the Deputy Superintendent tries to browbeat the Superintendent and sows seeds of discontent among the jail staff as well as among the inmates. The warders inside are not a happy lot due to inadequate service conditions and due to leave restrictions.

Under this charged atmosphere Bhai Gurdev Singh was shifted from Patiala on October 13. Earlier, he was confined to Jabalpur jail in M.P. He is a respected jathedar and the Sikh inmates wanted to meet him put the request was turned down.

On October 14, at about 10 AM, the Sikh inmates were out of barracks in the courtyard which was locked from outside. They demanded to see Bhai Gurdev Singh again but Mr Jagrup Singh refused permission. The inmates started raising slogans against Mr. Jagrup Singh. The Superintendent, too, reached the place and concurred with his deputy. Slogans against the Superintendent, too, were raised. Then an alarm was sounded and about 100 warders and guards, armed with rifles and lathis, reached inside the courtyard and started thrashing the undertrials who ran helter skelter. In the melee, many inmates and some warders, including the Superintendent, received lathi blows. After sometime peace prevailed but the jail authorities were not satisfied. Jagdish Singh Bhola, resident of Ahmedpur, police station Bhikhiwind, Amritsar district, Wassan Singh, resident of Sakhira, Amritsar district and Balwinder Singh, resident of Gill Patti, Bathinda, were picked up and were shot dead. The inmates were further infuriated and started raising slogans. The authorities became nervous and fired indiscriminately injuring more than two dozen inmates. These included Jagdeep Singh, Jagraj Singh, Piara Singh, Ranjit Singh, Basant Singh, Manjit Singh, Baldev Singh, Jagtar Singh, Gurmail Singh, Avtar Singh, Paramjit Singh, Gurdial Singh, Sukhwinder Singh, Gurcharan Singh, Kuldeep Singh, Beant Singh, Sukhwant Singh, Joga Singh, Harcharan Singh, Gurnam Singh, Darshan Singh, Labh Singh, Harminder Singh, Gurdeep Singh, Dilbar Singh, Jai Singh and Gurcharan Singh. Basant Singh later succumbed to his injuries in hospital.

The committee was distressed to know that no medical assistance was given to the injured for several hours. Attempts by advocates, pressmen and relatives of the

inmates for interviews were frustrated by the Deputy Superintendent who, evidently, wanted the incident not to be known outside. According to insiders, the Superintendent was given lathi blows by the guards and warders belonging to the Deputy Superintendent's faction so that the incident assumed bigger proportion and the result should be the disgrace of the jail head.

There is also evidence that the inmates killed as a result of the firing had prior understanding that they might be made a target of revenge by the Deputy Superintendent. At least two of them—Jagdish Singh Bhola and Wassan Singh—were said to be marked men. They had undertaken hunger strike while in Nabha jail to protest against the alleged fake encounter killings of Balwinder Singh and Ram Singh in Nabha jail in December 1986. They were shifted to Sangrur jail in the first week of January 1987. Both had written to the Inspector-General of Prisons in May, 1987, requesting for their transfer from Sangrur jail because, they alleged, the jail authorities wanted to kill them on one or the other pretext. In June 1987, when the D.I.G. and the A.I.G., Prisons, visited the Sangrur jail, they had made the request again to shift them but the request was ignored. These facts were verified by Lt Col H.S. Kahlon who was confined in Sangrur jail from January 1987 to July 1987.

Mr Rajdev Singh, Mr Sukhminder Singh Bhatti and Mr Narinder Singh Sidhu, advocates, filed a petition with the Designate Court, Sangrur, Mr R.S. Sharma, bringing to his notice the facts of the case of the killings. The court, prima facie, found substance in the complaint and directed the S.H.O. to register an F.I.R. The committee understands that no F.I.R. was registered by the S.H.O.

On October 16, 1987, counsel Rajdev Singh and others sought interviews with certain undertrials through the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sangrur, but the Deputy Superintendent, defying the court orders, did not allow counsel to interview their clients. Contempt of court proceedings against the Deputy Superintendent are pending against Mr Jagrup Singh.

A few jail warders and other staff members in the course of interviews with the members of the committee affirmed on assurance of anonymity that the inmates had no weapon of offence with them nor were they in possession of any brickbats. In fact, such missiles could not be concealed there owing to constant supervision and surprise checks. About 100 warders and guards attacked about three dozen unarmed undertrials. The attack was led by Mr Jagrup Singh. Undertrials went helter and skelter inside the walled compound. Due to mixing up

and melee a few jail warders and staff members, too, received lathi blows at the hands of the armed staff members. The circumstances of the infighting makes the committee suspect that the Superintendent was intentionally beaten up by men owing allegiance to Mr Jagrup Singh. After the incident, water pipes were pulled out by Mr Jagrup Singh and his men to make it appear that the inmates had used the pipes as lathis. Actually, the pipes are not so easily removable.

Role of the Press and Political Parties

The incident was reported on the next day of the occurrence by the Press largely based on the cock and bull story given out by the police. This was due to the fact that the local Pressmen were not allowed to go inside the jail. The true story started coming out in the subsequent days. A few Chandigarh based Correspondents showed enterprise to rush to Sangrur to report the matter. But their efforts were stonewalled by a bureaucracy that had a lot to conceal from the public.

However, the Press in general did not follow up the event considering the gravity of the issues involved. There was not a single story based on interviews with the victims of the incident. Nor any information was gathered from the correspondence between Sangrur and Chandigarh. Photographic representation of the event was absolutely zero. Not one important newspaper took editorial notice of the incident.

All this may be due to intense pressure the Press in Punjab is under the Ray-Ribeiro team who reportedly send out threats to these newsmen who dare report any such development.

No organisation, except for the P.H.R.O. and one or two Akali Dal factions, protested against the incident.

The P.H.R.O. regards the incident too serious to be ignored in this manner. Such treatment of undertrials is rare in the annals of politics in the world.

The Findings

1. The Committee finds substance in the view that at least two of the killed inmates were marked by the police and jail authorities of Punjab as ones who deserved to be "silenced" in some or the other manner.

2. The deaths of the three Sikh youths inside Sangrur jail appear to be the result of a deep rooted conspiracy in which involved are not only the Deputy Superintendent of Sangrur jail and his faction but also certain highups in the State.

3. The incident took place at 11 AM on October 14 but the F.I.R. was written and sent to the Chief Judicial Magistrate at 5 PM. This delay further points to the suspicion of a joint enterprise.

4. The failure of the S.H.O. to register a case of murder despite the order by the Designate Court, contempt proceedings against the Deputy Superintendent and the failure of the State Government or any other senior authority to

hold a credible enquiry all point to the conspiracy to eliminate the marked men by hook or by crook.

5. Already the State police killed in similar manner Manbir Singh Chaheru, Roshan Lal Bairagi, Tarsem Singh Kohar, Manjit Singh Bhindi, Subhag Singh, Sukhdev Singh Sukha etc. All of them were killed after taking them out of judicial lock up.

An Appeal to U.N., International Red Cross

The P.H.R.O. appeals to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, the Amnesty International, the International Red Cross as well as leaders of India's opposition political parties not to ignore the implications of the incident for the future of democracy and civilisation. It demands open public enquiry by a credible agency and trial of the guilty, howsoever the high-placed they may be. □

Court sets up panel to study pollution charge against firm

BANGALORE, Jan. 14.

Mr. Justice M. Ramajois and Mr. Justice H. G. Balakrishna, constituting a Division Bench of the Karnataka High Court today, appointed a five-member committee of experts to study and report on alleged pollution caused by the discharge of effluents into the Thungabhadra river by the Harihar Polyfibres Ltd. Ranebennur, Dharwar District.

The experts named are Dr. B.B. Sunderson, ex-Vice-Chancellor, Madras University, Dr. P. Khanna, Director, National Environment Research Institute, Dr. H.P.C. Shetty, Director of Instruction (Fisheries), University of Agricultural Sciences, Mangalore, Dr. J. Venugopalan Nair, Member Secretary, Kerala State Pollution Control Board, and Rev. Fr. C. J. Saldanha, Convenor, Centre of Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

The court requested the experts to make on the spot inspection within six months. Guidelines have been given for the study to be made.

The order was made in a public interest litigation initiated by the Transnational Centre and four others, contending that the effluents discharged by the company were a health hazard.

Their Lordships felt that the writ petition gave rise to a question of public importance as to what steps were taken by the company to protect public interest. Such matters could not be decided without a fact-finding report from a committee of experts on the subject, they said.

In the first place the adversaries of Punjab want to divide and weaken Punjab. Second, the feudal interests in Punjab are geographically so placed that they hope to carve out a state for the protection of their landed aristocracy. Third, some people hope to create at least one province in Pakistan which could prove as home-land for Urdu. Last, proposed riparian state will contend for the lions share because it will be situated along the river.

The land of five rivers, the historic Panjab, is politically restive yet another time. In its five thousand years of history—Harappa to the present—Panjab has shaped the destiny of peoples on either of its flanks.

In 1947 independence coincided with the partition of Punjab and Bengal. The boundary commission seared apart a heritage common for thousands of years. It suited the rulers of both the dominions succeeding the British crown to hold tightly to the division of a hoary legacy but the legacy refused to be torn asunder by the politicians. Immediately after the partition literateurs like Manto laughed at this cruel joke and wrote poignant pieces like Tobah Tek Singh. Humanists like Balraj Sahni toured across the divide and wrote memoirs to awaken Punjabis to their common heritage.

Any sensitive political regime would have nursed this commonness of the heritage and could have strengthened it into a lasting guarantee of peace between the two countries. But regimes are more keen on perpetuating themselves than bothering about lasting peace or its benefits. Politicians as a tribe are opportunistic. Not peace but war became the destiny of two countries and consequently Punjab became a battleground of warring states twice.

Communalism

Partition of Punjab was delivered by the communalisation of political life by the people hoping to be benefitted by this communalisation. After reaping the dividends of communalisation politicians sought to wish away the ginn which their incantations had called forth. The ginn however menaces humanity over and over again. In eastern Punjab it persuaded the Hindus of Jalandhar to disown Panjabi as their mother tongue. The Sikh communalism made Panth into a vote-gathering device. On the other side of the divide the Muhajar population looked at Punjab and Punjabi as menace to their rootless power.

Urdu the language of the Muhajar population and the official language of Pakistan has no homeland in Pakistan. In Punjab people remain attached to Punjabi. In Sindh the Sindhis are agitating for the recognition of Sindhi. In Baluchistan three different languages are used by the population. As a result Urdu does not have a province but manages to claim an entire country by force of circumstances.

In historical terms it creates

an embarrassing situation for the Urdu speaking elites of Pakistan. Whenever the democratic forces closer to the grass-roots will assert the elite will be endangered more critically because they will be without a common tie of language with the ascendent popular forces. An Urdu speaking elite lording over a Punjabi speaking population will be more vulnerable than a Punjabi speaking elite sharing language with the people. To an extent this discordance explains the ephemerality of the democratic experiment in Pakistan.

Either sensing or experiencing this kind of problems the ruling groups of Pakistan have always resorted to the communal shield for their protection. This defence takes the form of the view that religion ordains Urdu as the language of the Muslims. Some divines go the extent of asserting that other languages are an affair of the infidels. Obviously there is no limit to the monstrosities engendered by communalism.

Rational Response

Rational and humanist outlook though usually on the defensive against the onslaught of communalism in our public life has not yet thrown up its hands in despair. It has asserted and re-asserted itself against the onslaught of communalism. On both sides of the divide these forces have reinvigorated their resistance to the frenzy of communalism and resorted to defence of Panjabi identity over and above the religious or the communal identity.

The point is extremely well made by a visiting scholar from Pakistan. Sibot ul Hassan Zaigham is the most distinguished historian of Punjabi literature in Pakistan. He is also distinguished by his commitment to Punjabi and the struggle for elevation of Punjabi as the language of Punjab in Pakistan. In a seminar at the university of Delhi, Zaigham made his point in the following words: I am a Panjabi for the last four thousand years, a muslim for last eight hundred years, and a Pakistani for the last forty years only.

According to 1980 census the linguistic break up of Pakistan is as under:

Bilochistan	4.3 million
Frontier	10.9 million
Sind	18.9 million
Punjab	47.1 million

In one of his forthcoming essays Zaigham contends that Panjabi is the language 65% of the Pakistani population. Punjab enjoys political clout but Punjabi has not been accorded the place which it deserves.

Punjabi State

It is in order here to mention that in India a Punjabi speaking Punjab was constituted in 1966. In 1967 S. Lachhman Singh Gill decreed the status of Punjabi as the official language of Punjab. Indian Punjab has a full-fledged Punjabi university at Patiala and Punjabi is extensively used as a medium of instruction in Punjab. The 1985 settlement, popularly known as Rajiv-Longowal Accord, admits the necessity of developing facilities for Punjabi in territories outside Punjab. One may well attribute this to the relatively democratic polity of India in contrast to Pakistani experience.

In the essay referred to in the para before the preceding one Zaigham explores in detail the moves to create a Saraiki province in Pakistan. In a well documented argument Zaigham asserts that this a conspiracy to divide Punjab and to create an Urdu province in Pakistan. The language of Punjab is Punjabi. Those who want Urdu speaking population in Punjab should first provide ten thousand Urdu-speaking mothers in Punjab. Only their offspring could be counted as non-Punjabi speaking.

He explores in detail the forces proping up the demand for the partition of Pakistani Punjab.

In the first place the adversaries of Punjab want to divide and weaken Punjab. Second, the feudal interests in Punjab are geographically so placed that they hope to carve out a state for the protection of their landed aristocracy. Third, some people hope to create at least one province in Pakistan which could prove as home-land for Urdu. Last, but not the least, the river-water of the river Sind is at stake. The proposed riparian state will contend for the lions share because it will be situated along the river.

Zaigham concludes on a wary note. May be the Punjabis in Pakistan have to struggle hard and struggle for long to assert the rights of the legacy of Punjab.

When it comes to Punjabi Afzal Ahsan Randhawa has no peers. Poet, lawyer, political activist, novelist, short story writer and farmer to boot Randhawa is an institution by now. His name will remain forever in the annals of the popular, secular and democratic struggle of the people of this sub-continent.

The genius of Randhawa is best revealed in the epic 'Punjab di Waar'. Some excerpts:

ਸੁਣ ਓਇ ਦੁਸਮਣਾ ਰਾਵੀਆ !

ਅਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਂ

ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਮਾੜੇ ਬਣ ਗਏ

ਅੱਜ ਵੀ

ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ

ਅਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਂ

ਅੱਜ ਨਿਮਾਣੇ !!

੦

ਅਣਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ

ਬਾਹਰਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਿੰਨੇ ਕਟੜੇ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ?

ਕਿੰਨੇ ਘੱਲੂਘਾਰੇ ਹੋਏ ?

Panjab Punjab

G.S.

ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ
ਮੈਂ ਲੁੱਟੀ ?
ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ
ਮੇਰੀ ਚੁੰਨੀ ਪਾਟੀ ?
ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਵਾਰੇ ?
ਮੀਸ ਕਟਾਏ ?
ਕਿੰਨੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਕੰਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਚਿਣਵਾਏ ?
ਕਿੰਨੇ ਵਾਰ ਮੈਂ
ਸੋਈ !
ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਦਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੋਏ
ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਵੱਢੇ ਗਏ
ਤੇ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਅਸੀਂ
ਦੂਣ ਸਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ ?
ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰੀ ?
ਅਜੇ ਜਿਉਂਦੀ !
ਅਣਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ
ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਲਾਲ ਹਨ੍ਹੇਰੀਆਂ ਚੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ?
ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰੀ
ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਟਹਿਣੀਆਂ ਟੁੱਟੀਆਂ
ਛਾਵਾਂ ਲੁੱਟੀਆਂ

ਮੇਰੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਲੱਥੇ, ਮੱਛੇ ਪਏ
ਪਰ ਅਜੇ ਜਿਉਂਦੀ
ਅੰਗੂਣਹਾਰ ਮੈਂ !!

੦

ਅਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ !

ਇਕ ਤੁਾਰੀਖ਼ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਹੋਈ

ਅਣਗਿਣਤੀਆਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ

ਇਕ ਮੁਕੱਦਸ ਪੋਥੀ ਦੇ

ਅਸੀਂ ਖਿੱਲਰੇ ਵਰਕੇ

'ਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਡਦੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਵਰਕਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ

ਜਗਦੇ ਬਲਦੇ ਅੱਖਰ

ਉੱਚੇ ਸਿਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਪੱਗ ਦੀਆਂ

ਪਾਟੀਆਂ ਖਿੱਲਰੀਆਂ ਲੀਰਾਂ

ਪੰਜ ਦਰਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋਰਾਵਰ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀਆਂ

ਖਿੰਡੀਆਂ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ

'ਸਪਤ ਸਿੰਧੂ' ਦੇ ਜਾਏ

ਖਿੱਲਰੇ ਪੁੱਲਰੇ

ਅਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ਅੱਜ ਨਿਮਾਣੇ

ਕਲ ਤੱਕ

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਂ

੦

ਇਕ ਹੜ੍ਹ ਚੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ

ਯੂਨਾਨ ਤੋਂ

ਜਿਹਨੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਰੋੜ੍ਹੀ

ਜਿਧਰ ਜਾਵੇ

ਅੱਗੇ ਕੁਝ ਨ ਅੜਦਾ

ਕਿੰਨੇ ਖਾਨ, ਮਲਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜੇ 'ਅੱਭੀ'

ਅੱਭੀ ਵਾਂਞੀ ਭੱਜੇ ਜਾਵਣ

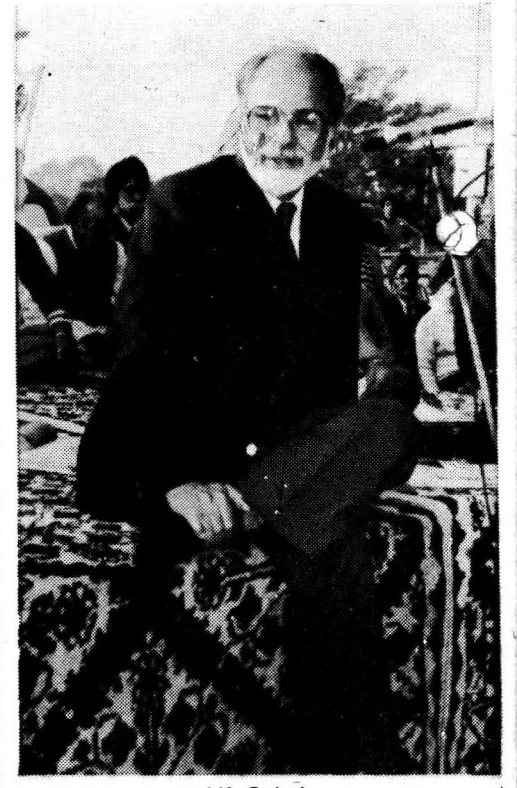
ਉਹਦੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਤਾੜਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ

ਸੀਸ ਝੁਕਾਵਣ

ਆਖਣ "ਬਸਕੀ" !

ਉਹ ਹਰ ਸ਼ੈ ਨੂੰ ਰੋੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਵੇ

ਚੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਆਵੇ



I.K. Gujral

ਮੇਰੇ 'ਭਾ' ਪੋਰਸ' ਨੇ (ਰਾਠ, ਬਹਾਦਰ, ਅਣ) ਪੋਰਸ

ਉਹਨੂੰ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ

ਛਾਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਡੱਕਿਆ

ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਮਾਰ ਮੁਕਾਵਣ ਵਾਲਾ

ਉਹ ਸਿਕੰਦਰ

ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ

ਕੱਟ ਕਮਾਲੀਏ ਕੱਲੇ

ਮੰਜੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਮੋੜਿਆ !

੦

ਵੱਡਾ ਤਖਤ ਚੁਗੱਤਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ

ਕਿੰਨੇ ਪਾਵੇ ਭੰਨੇ ?

ਕਲਗੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ

ਤੇ ਉਹਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਜਾਂ ਨੇ !

ਘਰ ਘਰ ਜੰਮੇ ਦੁੱਲੇ ਭੱਟੀ

ਦਿੱਲੀ ਰੰਡੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰੋਂਦੀ

ਵੇਖੋ ਪਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵੱਲ

ਤਖਤ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦੇ ਬੱਲੇ

ਵਗਿਆ ਰਾਵੀ ਵਾਂਗੂੰ

ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਸਦੀਆਂ

ਲਹੂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ?

ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰੀ

ਬੱਧਾ ਝੁਕਿਆ

ਕਦੇ ਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਹੋਵਣ ਵਾਲਾ

ਸਿਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ

ਤਖਤ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦੇ

ਪਾਵੇ ਭੰਨ ਕੇ

ਆਪਣਾ ਠੱਪਾ ਲਾਇਆ

ਦੇਸ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ

ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ (ਕਲਾਲ) ਨੇ

੦

ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਲਾਲ ਹਨੇਰੀ

ਜਿਸਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਫਰੰਗੀ

andhu



ਹਰ ਰਣ ਜਿੱਤਣ ਵਾਲਾ
ਮੁਲਖ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਲਾੜਾ
ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਉਹ ਸ਼ੇਰ 'ਰਣਜੀਤ'
ਆਪਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਹਰ ਗਿਆ
ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਘੋੜੇ
ਸਰਹੱਦ, ਖੈਬਰ ਤੇ ਕਾਬੁਲ
ਦੂਜੇ ਦਾ ਤਿੱਬਤ, ਲੱਦਾਖ਼, ਸਕਰਦੂ (ਸਮਰਕੰਦ)
ਤੀਜੇ ਬਾਹੀ ਚੰਬਾ, ਕਾਂਗੜਾ, ਜੰਮੂ ਤੇ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ
ਚੌਥੇ ਦਾ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ
ਚਾਰੀਂ ਕੁੰਟੀ'
ਧੂੜਾਂ ਜਾ ਧਮਾਣ
ਦੇਸ 'ਪੰਜਾਬ' ਦੇ ਜੱਸ ਗਾਵਣ
ਤੇ ਹੁੰਮਾਂ ਪਾਉਣ
ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ
ਆਪਣਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਹਰਿਆ

ਰੱਸੀਆਂ ਧਰ ਧਰ ਵੰਡ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਨੇ
 ਮਰ ਗਇਆਂ ਦੇ ਥਾਂ
 ਸਿਰ ਦਾ ਸਾਈਂ ਮਰਿਆ
 ਤੇ ਸੁਹਣੀ ਰਾਣੀ ਦੇਸ 'ਪੰਜਾਬ' ਦੀ ਰੰਡੀ ਹੋਈ
 ਬਾਹੁਣਲਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ
 ਅੱਖਾਂ ਉੱਨੀਆਂ
 ਹੱਥ ਵਧੇ
 ਤੇ ਮੱਲਾਂ ਵੱਜੀਆਂ
 ਪੁੱਤਰ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ
 ਜਿੰਦੜੀ ਘੱਲ ਘੁਮਾਵਣ
 ਮੱਥੇ ਵਟ ਨ ਪਾਵਣ
 ਗੋਰੇ ਰਾਜ ਤੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਹਿੰਦ
 ਆ ਮੱਥਾ ਲਾਇਆ
 ਬੇ-ਮਾਲਿਕ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੇਖੀਆਂ ਜੱਗ ਉਡਾਰੀਆਂ
 'ਮੁਦਕੀ', 'ਫੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ' 'ਅਲੀਆਲ'
 'ਸਭਰਾਉ' ਤੇ 'ਚੇਲੀਆਂਵਾਲੇ'
 ਘਰ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਨੇ ਮਾਰੇ
 ਤਾਂ ਵੀ
 ਉਹਦਿਆਂ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ
 (ਬਾਜ਼ਾਂ-ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ)
 ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਲੱਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਢੱਕ ਲਈ
 ਮੱਖਣ ਵਰਗੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਾਂ
 ੦
 ਲਾਲ ਹਨੇਰੀ
 ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਫਰੰਗੀ
 ਕਿਹਨੇ ਡੱਕੀ ?
 'ਰਣਜੀਤ' ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ
 ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਢਾਹੇ ਲਗਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਭਗਤ ਜਿੰਘ
 ਤੇ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਲੱਖ ਬੇ-ਨਾਮ ਜੁਆਨਾਂ, ਰਾਮ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਜਿ

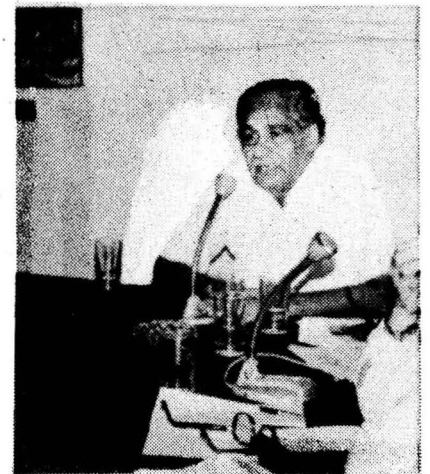
Urdu the language of the Muhajar population and the official language of Pakistan has no homeland in Pakistan. In Punjab people remain attached to Punjabi. In Sindh the Sindhis are agitating for the recognition of Sindhi. In Bauchistan three different languages are used by the population. As a result Urdu does not have a province but manages to claim an entire coutry by force of cicumstances.

[illegible]

मिथुन ज्योतिष



— **Balraj Puri**



— Kuldip Navar —



BALRAI SHAN

Superior Tea Set

Ajit Saini

As I stood outside the magnificent mansion named Gobind Niwas. I felt a little apprehensive. I pulled out the card from my pocket to reassure myself. It read: Gobind Niwas, Industrial Area, Ludhiana. Though my apprehensions had been allayed, I crossed the gate hesitatingly.

This magnificent bungalow belonged to Gobind Das my friend and classmate from college days. We were very close to each other. So much so that even our habits were alike and our weaknesses common. Probably, due to these very factors, we grew fond of the same girl, Shashi. We were a pair of inseparables and the fact that we both liked the same girl, did not mar our relations.

Shashi did not belong to this world. To us, she appeared as a heavenly body that had come down to grace the world. Wherever she went, she electrified the atmosphere with her sharp features, deer-like dark and vast eyes, and peahen-like gait. Somehow, she became more fond of Gobind Das and they finally married.

"Perfectly alright. How about you? I find that you have grown into a seth. How did you make it?" I queried with a smile.

He started laughing and, taking my hand, said, "Come in, I will tell you everything".

He ordered his servant to bring in tea and we started talking. It is but natural that when old friends meet, conversation should never die. Hardly a topic finished when another cropped up. We talked of old times, of tales of faded and yet smouldering loves for girls, and college days. We were still engrossed in the memories of the past when the servant brought tea.

The moment Gobind Das had a look at the tea set, he went all red and thundered at the servant. "You swine, my repeated warnings have had no effect on you. You always forget and blunder. He, of course, is one of us. If it were an outsider...."

"No sir, I did not forget. But, the superior set is in the almirah and the mistress who has gone to the market has taken the keys with her."

are termed new light, new culture and heavens know what. Nothing succeeds without appearance these days and it forms a prominent part of our everyday life."

"Skip this sermon on modernity," I said and, trying to change the subject, asked: "How is Shashi?"

"Does she still linger in your thoughts?" He asked with a smile.

"I had lost interest in her the day she was engaged to you. But I do have a right to ask about the welfare of Mrs Gobind Das."

"Have it your way, old chap, don't be annoyed."

"When will she come back from the market?"

"Market? She is not here."

"How come? Only just now the servant was saying that the mistress had gone to the market and taken the keys with her."

"Oh, that! He was talking about Krishna, old skunk," he said with a big laugh.

"Krishna? Who is Krishna?" I asked in a surprise.

"You don't know, well how could you know either? You haven't met her. She is my second wife."

cannot live up to it. A beautiful wife who can acquit herself well in society is a big recommendation these days. This answers your question, how I have progressed so far. If you ask me the truth, this is all due to Krishna's personality. She is very friendly and is fully acquainted with the practices of high society. She is a great help

in my business and even today, she has gone out in that very connection. I was a little unwell and she had to go alone.

"Hun...That is it. Then your second wife is also the superior tea set" I tauntingly remarked.

"Superior tea set ha, ha, ha..." he guffawed and I could feel the embarrassment in his laughter.

Dr Randhawa's contributions remembered

New Delhi, February 2: A decision to commemorate the achievements and contributions of late Dr. M. S. Randhawa at the national level during 1988, the year of his 80th birth anniversary, was taken at a public meeting held at the India International Centre, here today.

Eminent writers, art critics and artists participated in the function which was presided over by Mr Arjun Singh, minister for communications. The keynote address was delivered by Mr G.S. Dhillon, minister for agriculture.

The participants pledged total support to the projects to be taken up by the Punjab Sahitya Academy under the aegis of the Punjab Arts Council in Chandigarh.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr G.S. Dhillon exhorted the ministry of agriculture and its related departments to organise seminars and lectures at the national level to highlight Dr. Randhawa's special place in

the field of agriculture and its allied sciences. Later released the 4th and last volume of the history of Indian agriculture by Dr. M.S. Randhawa. These volumes, he said, would serve as reference books on agriculture.

Mr Arjun Singh, made a moving reference to his association with Dr. M.S. Randhawa, first as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh and later as governor of Punjab. Recalling his many services to the nation, Mr Arjun Singh declared that his ministry will issue a commemorative postal stamp this year.

Dr. Mulik Raj Anand suggested that the Punjab Arts Council should institute a Randhawa Memorial Foundation to facilitate the commemorative projects. The participants, emphasised that functions be organised in various cities and towns of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi during the year.

Rush for Priya's 'job forms'

From Debashis Aikat

Howrah, Jan. 13: In a bid to keep up his pre-election promise of jobs to Congress workers, the Union minister of state for commerce, Mr Priya Ranjan Dass Munshi, has released a thousand "employment information" forms in all the seven blocks of his constituency, Howrah.

Though it has been clearly printed on the forms that "an information bank of deserving unemployed youth was being made and it is not a guarantee to or assurance of any job," there is a mad rush for the forms among Congress workers. Ordinary party workers genuinely believe that all those who apply would be provided with jobs in various departments of the Union commerce ministry.

Three different forms have been distributed. A white one for those who have dropped out of schools; a green one for undergraduates and a pink one for honours graduates, post-graduate, doctors, chartered accountants and engineers. While there has been an overwhelming demand for the white forms, the other two are still available to those party workers with some clout.

The forms were distributed by the twenty-four Congress councillors, four MLAs, block Congress presidents and some prominent party leaders from Howrah. They were directed to distribute them to those workers "in deference to their faithful service to the party." But seeing the rush, some of

these leaders have kept the forms under lock and key.

Though a section of aggrieved Congressmen has questioned Mr. Das Munshi's intentions by branding the whole exercise as a "gimmick," the minister himself has justified his motives. In a statement from Delhi, Mr Das Munshi, said the whole idea was to provide unemployed youths with information on job vacancies as and when available. According to the minister, every day his "office is flooded with thousands of letters asking for jobs. I cannot answer to each of them individually and this biodata collection will help me. This is not an illegal practice. I have also made it clear that I am not giving any assurance for jobs." However, he has hastened to promise that "For those who do not get jobs, alternative help like disbursement of loans and other provisions may be arranged."

But it is a mystery how this distribution of "biodata forms" is going help the ten lakh or so unemployed in Howrah district alone. Moreover, a large number of workers are yet to return their application forms. Congressmen do not rule out the possibility of vested interests printing these forms, thereby making some quick money.

(From The Telegraph)



After completing my college education, I had joined the army and gone abroad. Gobind Das had taken to business and, in a matter of a mere four to five years, had grown into a seth from the son of a poor school teacher. He was an important and wealthy iron merchant. His sudden rise to fortune set me thinking as I moved across the lawn towards the house. What art did he possess?

Old memories came flooding into my mind as I saw Gobind Das having a stroll in the lawn. He looked the same thin, lean man and, despite a lapse of years, I could notice no change in his appearance. He recognised me at once and calling my name in a surprised tone, embraced me. "How are you?" he asked.

"Alright, get out," spat Gobind Das, though a little chastened. Picking up the thread, I asked Gobind Das if he kept two different tea sets.

"Yes," he said. "There is nothing strange about it. It is almost a common custom in."

"We, whatever you might say, you cannot close your eyes to facts."

"But it does sound strange to me," I insisted.

"It does sound strange to me. The spread of modernity seems to emphasise largely outer appearances."

"You are a mere army man and you can't appreciate these finer things. These very appearances you must know



"Second wife? Have you divorced Shashi?"

"Of course not!"

"Then what the hell do you mean by second marriage? Is she more beautiful than Shashi? Or have you quarrelled?"

"Hell, you want me to reply to so much in a single breath. Where should I start?"

"Alright. Let us have the answers one by one. First of all, tell me if you have quarrelled with Shashi. And where is she?"

"Of course, there has been no quarrel. She has gone to her mother in the village."

"It beats me. Why did you marry a second time? Is Krishna more beautiful than Shashi?"

"She is not more beautiful but, you know, Shashi is extremely shy. She cannot mix in society despite her education. These days it is hard to succeed if one's spouse

Book Review

Politics of Passions

Delhi Meerut Riots edited by Asghar Ali Engineer. Delhi, Ajanta Publications, 1987. Pp 264, Rs. 150.00

In May 1987 Meerut witnessed one of the worst communal riots in independent India. These were not worst in the sense that many people were killed but also because of the role played by the Police force and administrative negligence to the core. Delhi too was engulfed in the violence. Apparently the communal carnage in Meerut began with an insignificant event. But who has even a little understanding of the prevailing atmosphere knows that these riots were not consequence of some or the other event. Not only communal cancer has been spreading all over India because of complex socio-economic and political causes but since the emergence of Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy all of Uttar Pradesh has become a communal powder keg.

While one has to grapple with the problem of ever increasing communalism, fundamentalism and violence the events of Meerut raise a few urgent questions which not only need to be answered but also demand serious and continuous attention. Why did the administration fail in Meerut, although notice has been served (so to speak) with a smaller riot a month earlier? What are the emerging contours of the problem? What role the emerging and established leadership is playing to defuse or accentuate the communal tensions? What perceptions are emerging among the people in general? What should be done to reverse the surging tide of communalism before it swamps the country? These and connected questions seek immediate attention.

Asghar Ali Engineer a noted Islamicist in India has done a useful documentation of the writings on Delhi-Meerut riots in order to probe these issues in a concerned manner. The collection, primarily, presents eye witness accounts of gruesome communal frenzy from journalists. The accounts, however, are not limited to reporting or description. They seriously analyse them and try to go deep into the malice, fix responsibilities, and make suggestions for all those who care for their communities, society and the nation as a whole.

Involved Reporting

The book is divided in to six parts. Part I provides description and analysis of the happenings. Prominent journalists including Nikhil Chakravarty, M.J. Akbar, Inderjit Budhwar, Ajay Bose etc.

Almost all of them report as involved citizens then mere reporters. Their focal theme is the way ruling politicians colluded with the rank communalists in unbelievable acts of arson and rape, rage and

pillage. Part II is a reflection on the role of PAC particularly in Maliana massacre and thereafter. This is primarily in the nature of description of horrible role played by the so-called guardians of law and order turning in to communal army. The conclusions are obvious and need no explanations. Part III is a collection of editorials from leading national newspapers and periodicals including Times Of India, Indian Express, India Today, Economic and Political Weekly, Telegraph, Blitz, Urdu Time, Faizal etc. Though there are differences of opinions on matters of detail almost all editorials agree that the communal holocaust in Meerut has to be seen against the background of mounting communal tension all over particularly in relation to Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid issue. They also take a serious note of the part played by the administration and the police forces and opine, that it was the mishandling of issues by the Government that partly resulted in the situation.

Part IV contains interviews with Syed Shahabudin the Janta M.P. and Vir Bahadur Singh the UP chief Minister. Both these interviews speak of themselves. Part V is a documentation of some reports from the language press. Part VI is a collection of various documents including letters and memorandum etc. written and/or submitted by public men, organisations and parties etc. Needless to say the documents apart from drawing attention to the happenings do make some suggestions for communal harmony.

The Issues

In spite of the absence of a determined common theme a few general points do emerge from various accounts. The first issue that comes out clearly is the rapid polarisation among the two communities. To quote Asghar Ali Engineer:

What is sad the Hindus told me how many Hindus have been killed and the Muslims how many Muslims were slaughtered. No one was genuinely concerned with human life as such.

The writers also see a ray of hope in the ordinary people, both Hindu and Muslim, who sincerely believe in peaceful and amicable co-existence. They are understanding the political game behind non-issues which are made important for communalisation.

Another issue which emerges out of various essays and reports is that most important immediate cause for prevailing communal tension and these riots is Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi controversy. The politics of confrontation emerging out of this has played havoc. For instance describing the role of fundamentalists making use of this issue M.J. Akbar writes:

The new politics of these modern extremists is actually an echo of the old

Muslim league politics. "Turn nationalism into a bargaining point. Threaten the state with revolt in order to win your demands. And arm yourself to prove how strong you can be."

It is therefore suggested by the contributors that Babri-Masjid-Ram Janam Bhoomi controversy must be immediately resolved. If early steps are not taken in that direction, for lack of political courage or for manipulating votes, there will be many more Meeruts.

Third general observation is about the role of P.A.C. Some of the sensitive writers feel much concerned for this type of phenomena emerging in the Indian polity. Nikhil Chakravarty for instance points.

The serious implications of this PAC killing seem to have been missed by both the government and political parties. Here is a clear case of an organ of the state going out with cold-blooded calculation to raid and round up a whole group of citizens, whisk them away, shoot them while in custody and then throw their bodies into

the river. Such fiendish acts have never taken place before. Let it be repeated these persons were not arrested while actually engaged in any violent act; the police produced no charges against them; they were not told where they were being taken, and then they were liquidated. Doesn't this remind one of the Nazi pogroms against the Jews?

Fourth common observation is about high handed and calous apathy on the part of administration up to the highest level. The editor of the volume on the basis of field reports say:

What is most shameful for it is that the Chief Minister Mr. Vir Bahadur Singh is not less involved in the massacre by the PAC in Meerut. All evidence goes to show that it has happened with his connivance.... He was unwilling to withdraw the PAC when it was on its killing spree. He was against handing over the town to the army.

On the basis of various reports carried in the book the

Meerut tragedy can be summed up in M.J. Akbar's observation:

we have reached then a circle of vicious and horrible distress: on the one side political parties life the Janta giving legitimacy to leaders like Shahabudin, and on the other criminal and communal forces like the PAC using this excuse to indulge in the massacre of innocents. And in this process, the people are getting communalised as never before. There is no Congress and Janta or Lok, Dal during riots in Meerut. There is only Hindus and Muslims. Even so called "leftist" congress leaders of Meerut have become great devotees of the P.A.C.

The book is a useful documentation and record of events which need dispassionate analysis. Authors have written quite objectively and with a sense of concern for the society. Readers will find it useful for more than one purpose.

A.s. Narang

DELHI MEERUT RIOTS



EDITOR
ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Anti Dowry Effort in Haryana-II

Reluctance of Villagers to Accept Reality

Bharat Dogra

In this second part of the report as the anti-dowry effort in Haryana, a cross-section of villagers express their opinion on the subject.
Bharat Dogra

14 years back the little known village of Alawalpur now included in Faridabad district (Haryana) had suddenly come to limelight as the centre of the anti-dowry movement which abolished dowry among the Jat families of hundreds of villages of this area. This reporter accompanied by a social worker of this area recently visited this village to find out to what extent this reform effort still retains its impact and has contributed to improving the social life of this area.

As we left the village market we met a group of men sitting in front of a house and engrossed in a discussion. Most of them turned out to be jats and were only too willing to speak about the social reform effort. Some of them also remembered our earlier visit some years back and hastened to add that the reform movement was functioning very well as before. Raghuvir Singh said that there may be a few violations as happens in such efforts, but these are also punished.

He mentioned the case of one teacher who was made to pay a fine for having violated the regulations. He said that the influence of this effort now extended not only to several village of Faridabad and Gurgaon districts but also to several villages of Uttar Pradesh in the neighbourhood (Mathura and Agra districts). He said that several other unnecessary expenditures involving social prestige have also been curbed, but feasts at the time of the birth of sons are still allowed. All the regulations have been put down on paper and these have to be respected. Even when girls from here are given in marriage to boys outside the regulation area, still the latter cannot dare to go against the regulations. All the caste elders intervene if this is done, he said.

Other persons present at this gathering by and large confirmed what he was saying. Some old persons recalled how expensive marriages had become before this reform effort and how destructive these were for small farmers. A pandit (brahman) youth present in this gathering said that keeping this in view in his caste too some efforts had been made to regulate and curb marriage expenses along similar lines but these had failed.

The Castes

Tnext group of persons to whom we talked comprised mostly non-jat villagers. They readily agreed that efforts in this direction made among the brahmins had failed, and such efforts had not even been made among the harijans.

However, they were equally emphatic in denying that the social reform had been a success among the jats. They conceded that for some initial years this may have been a success and that is why other castes were motivated to emulate, even if unsuccessfully, this example, but as far as the present situation is concerned, all the persons present in this group said with one voice that at present the regulations regarding dowry are being widely violated. Some pretence of observing the regulations may be made, but the spirit of the regulations is clearly violated, they said. For instance expensive presents or cash may not be given at the time of the first marriage ceremony, instead these are given at the time of the second ceremony known as gauna. Or else, at the time of the sagal (engagement) the regulation may be observed in so far as only one rupee is given to the boy, but instead a lot of cash is given to his mother. Of what use is this hypocrisy, the men asked. Some of them said that the situation is now even worse than earlier as at that time at least the social evil existed in an open form whereas among the jats it now exists in a disguised form.

So at this stage we were confused by the different versions given by different villagers—some saying that the effort was still a success and some saying that it had largely failed. Understanding our predicament some helpful villagers suggested that we should meet a teacher, Master Deep Chand.

On the one hand, Master Ji is a jat who believes in this effort and has carefully observed the regulations at the time of the marriage of his sons. On the other hand, he has also suffered personally due to the violation of these regulations by others in the context of marriage of a daughter. So some villagers felt that Master Ji may be able to give us a very balanced view.

When we reached his home, Master Ji was not at home, and so we starting talking to his wife Reshma. She immediately became serious and started saying that this social reform effort is a success. At this point another lady who was visiting her home intervened and questioned her claims. Soon their discussion became so loud and fierce that anyone not knowing that their family ties are very friendly would have taken this to be a fight. On making inquiries we learnt that this lady was none other than Dariyao Devi, the wife of the late Khazan Singh, former Sarpanch of the village who had played a very leading role in this social reform movement. So her commitment to the initial effort could not be disputed and yet she was very critical of the claim that the movement is still a success. This evoked our keen interest and we tried to elicit her opinion in detail.

Disguised Forms

The trux of her argument was that no doubt this was a very good effort which if implemented properly would have benefitted the villagers a lot and that is why

her husband had worked so hard for this effort, but in more recent times there have been large scale violations of these regulations among the jats and trying to hide this fact will not help. "What is the use if you stop giving by one hand, and

start giving by another hand," she said referring to the disguised forms of dowry—giving that have emerged in recent times.

To us it was important that in the fierce discussion that ensued between Daryao Devi and Reshma, it was the former who clearly victorious.

By giving several examples she forced an unwilling Reshma to concede the basic correctness of her assertions. When we told Daryao Devi that some jats had told us that this effort was still a big success, she voiced open contempt for their hypocrisy in not recognising the reality and speaking it out.

Soon, Master Deep Chand also appeared on the scene. He is a very gentle person and a firm believer in this social reform programme. At the time of marriage of his son, he said, he clearly told the bride's parents that if the marriage party exceeds the regulated number (11) by even one, then they should ask the twelfth person to leave. However, it is tragic that such a man has suffered in personal life due to non-observance of these regulation by others. Sadly, he says, the number of girls being left by their husbands and forced to return to their parents' home has been increasing. On being questioned closely, he reluctantly admitted that the majority of jat families in his village may be violating these regulations to a lesser or greater extent.

While walking back from the village across a dusty road to the railway station of Palwal 5 kms. away to catch a train back to Delhi, we stopped for some time at Naya Gaon (Fazalpur) village. And what we heard here only confirmed the earlier impression. "Yes, nothing may be given to the boy at the time of the sagai", said one person with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "but Rs. 5100/- will surely be given on the sly to the boy's mother." (To be concluded)



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Letters

Appeal to Akali Leaders

As you all know that presently the heart of each and every Sikh is bleeding due to loss of its prestige and dignity for which the entire responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Akali leadership. It is unfortunate that even though every one of you also feels the same way, but have not been bold enough to own ones mistake and beg for the pardon from the Khalsa Panth. The Sikh community is known for its high morals and sacrifices to live up to those principles and ideals laid by their great Gurus, for that sake discarded away any temptation of status and benifit at the cost of the Khalsa Panth. Since, under the present circumstances the very existence of the Khalsa Panth is at stake the whole community begs of you and other Akalis to realise the gravity of the situation, and as such sacrifice all your egos and personal interests. This act of your parts will show, what values do you people attach to the sacrifices of our great Gurus and the CHAR SHIBZADE and innumerable saints. Rightly Sardar Partap

Singh Gill ex-LT GOVERNOR of GOA have said that presently we need FAKIRI and not ALNRI to serve the cause of the community. Regretably, you people have gone on the path of confrontation, a ruinous one. It was the time to have lived up to the command of Gurbani "JO DISE GUR SIKHRA NIV NIV LOGON PAINE JIO", where as we have started treating each one of us as enemy. Please ponder over this, would our present attitude lead us to our Panthic goal?

Since, Mr Badal has been released a chain of Sikh rallies are being organised by both Mr. Badal and Mr. Mr Barnala. The main theme of speeches is to run down each other, and misguide the innocent Sikh masses to obtain their support for their personal ends. The mud slinging is a new phenomenon in the Akali politic where as its earlier record of 60 years is full of glories for the Khalsa Panth and for the independence of the country. And, if one examines the recent acts of all these Akali factions, each one will stand guilty in

some way or other of heinous acts against the Panthic cause. To cut it short, it would bohave well on you all Akali leaders to surrender yourself to the command of Akal Takht Sahib, and blindly obey to its or rs like a good old soldier and army tradition "I am not to question why, but to do and die". Unless under this spirit we subjugate our actions, we cannot hope to revive the Khalsa spirit to claim and obtain our rightful place in the country and our proper voice to be heard in the Parliament. You will have to unite to restore the Khalsa Panths' status as per the agreement of 1929 drawn between the Indian National Congress and the Sikh community in Lahore. It is not an easy task to achieve, but it would become easy too if Khalsa Panth is united, than the Government and other national leaders will have to give due thought to it too.

We would request Professor Darshan Singh Ji, the Acting Jathedar Sahib of Akal Takht Sahib to exercise all means to pave a way for the ex-communicated Sikhs enabling them to come back in the Sikh fold. If Guru Gobind Singh Ji could pardon Bhai Mahan

Singh and his 40 Muktas and torne off their "BIDAWA", we could also show flexibility of mind while dealing with such an important task before the community. It is felt that unless all the Akali factions are brought in one fold, we cannot hope to have the unity needed to meet the Panthic requirement. This should remain our guide line to work on this knotty problem.

Another immediate problem is to deal with the state as well as individual terrorism, which is endangering the unity and integrity of the country, which is under great strains. However along with this other very urgent problems have to be tackled are, the killings of Sikh youth in fake police encounters, release of Jodhpur detainees, rehabilitation of Sikh army deserters and widows/orphans of carnage of Nov. 1984, full compensation for loss of properties in Nov. 1984, punishment to the calprits of Nov. 1984 and last but not the least the killing of Sikhs while in police custody and harassment under the National Security Act, which is a daily affair not only in Punjab but outside Punjab also. All this is a great strain on ones daily li.

There is a need to caution the Sikh community about the very harmful disease of sufficing letters after their parties e.g. (L), (B) and so on. It must be noted that the Khalsa Panth had never had this way of leadership. It had the leadership of "NISHAN SAHIB" and it functioned as per the dictates of our Gurus and NOT any one else. Now a days people are being asked to follow so and so "SANT" or any other personality. This amounts to placing the Sikh faith in these worldly people and forgetting the dictates of our great Gurus. It is necessary that we must think over such matters very seriously. To combat this disease, the Akali Dal must be known without any suffix. It is hoped that this letter would be taken in its right spirit, and soon we will witness the old Sharomni Akali Dal functioning to lead the Khalsa panth, and maintaining its "CHAD DI KALA". With best of LUCK

Yours Sincerely
Lt. Col. Manohar Singh
Convener South Delhi
Singh Sabha Confederation.

Bodh Gaya Math-II

Struggle Against Mahant and his Zamindari

In the backdrop of continuing violation of all land reform laws by the mahanth year after year, with the government sitting as a silent spectator, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini launched the Bhoomi Mukti Andolan in the late seventies. Action Committees involving peasants and labourers in the villages were formed and they were organised by the band of Vahini youths against the exploitation by the 'Math'. The labourers refused to work on 'Math' land, as a result of which most of the 'math' land remained uncultivated. To counter this non-cooperation by the local labourers, the Mahantha attempted to forcibly cultivate the land by bringing hired labourers from outside. The local labourers protested against this and the mahanth retaliated with violence by letting loose his musclemen on the village women and children. And on August 8, 1979, hirelings of the mahantha fired upon a group of protesting villagers in Mastipur killing two harijans and injuring several others. People still recount this now infamous 'Mastipur Golikand' with terror writ large on their faces. However, villagers admit that it is only after this incident that the government, after almost three decades of dilly dallying, stepped in.

A nine-member, Committee was formed in October 1979, to go into the several aspects of the Bodh-Gaya estate. The Committee submitted its report-which only confirmed what was already known-in the

second half of 1980 and following this, the Government initiated legal action against the mahanth and his Trust which came to an end in August '87, with the Supreme Court dismissing the mahanth's appeal and thereby allowing the Administration to acquire 4123.61 acres of surplus land from the mahanth. Although this judgment does not mark the end of the mahanth or the math which have outlived their utility, it may well mark the beginning of the end of a four hundred year old 'Zamindar'.

Thwarting Reforms

The Bodh-Gaya math is not the only symbol of an anochromistic Zamindar successfully thwarting the implementation of different land reform laws and other legislations. Nor is it by far the last, although it may have been the largest of such 'Zamindars'. The fact that it took over three decades—in fact the first legal action was launched against the Math under the Zamindari Abolition Act in the year 1953—of intense legal battle and mass struggle to acquire less than half of the total estate estimated to be held by the Math only reflects the strength of the landlords vis-a-vis the legislations or conversely the tooth lessness of the legislations vis-a-vis the Zamindars. That the "Socialist...democratic" government dithered until they were woken up by the collective strength of the villagers mobilised under the banner of Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini speaks eloquently for the sincerity—or the lack of it—

Abhijit Bhattacharjee

with which the government implements its own legislations. Note the following—

"In 1957, when the case against the Mahanth was still pending with the SC, the Government accepted the Mahant's claim that most land belonged to the Mahant himself and not to the Trust.

"For full eight years when the ceiling laws were passed, the Mahant managed to transfer in the name of his disciples and sanyasis over 6.00 acres of land—and this figure is only for those cases which have been identified. As the Enquiry Committee was to note later" most of these sale and transfers were forged transfers as many cases have come to our notice where land has been transferred in the name of people whose existence either in the village or in the panchayat registers or even in the electoral rolls could not be traced." Surely, the District Admn. could not have been unaware of these forgeries.

"The oppression and exploitation of the farm labourers, mostly the annual contract labourers called 'Kamia' by the mahanth, defies even the worst imagination. As Mr C. Jha, a now retired official who was posted in the Bodh-Gaya circle in early eighties comments: "when most of the labourers are bonded slaves, there is no question of paying minimum wages voluntarily by the landlords". Condition of the mahantha's labourers was summed up by Shri. S.

Jagannathan, a former President of the Sarva Seva Sangh, who while drawing attention to the plight of the harijan labourers (most of the Mahanth's 'Kamias' were harijans), wrote in 1980: "They were eating a sort of stuff similar to saw dust. That was the grinded flour from the rotten paddy distributed to the people as wages from the math. The people cannot pound and get any rice (grain) from this paddy. So they grind the whole with the husk and eat. The brawn of the rice is fed to the cattle in our part of the country, but here the outer husk of the rotten paddy (is) grinded and used as food. We saw men and women carrying at the end of their day's work little bundles of their 'wages'. We found it was one and a half kilo of the rotten paddy mixed with chaff, straw and dust".

"From the land revenue record of Gaya district, it is found that 507 landlords each holding land in excess of ceiling laws own about 36123.95 acres. So far only a total of 17754.67 acres of 'Surplus' land has been acquired in the whole district which has a total cultivable land of 7,86,115 acres:

Hard Facts

All these are hard facts, Although specific to the mahanth case, but if we juxtapose these with the information available about the whole of Bihar, things seem to fall in place. The state of land reforms in the state of Bihar is reflected in the fact that only a

very small share of surplus cultivable land has been acquired in Bihar in three decades after the much touted 'Zamindari abolition'. The last may or may not have taken place, but the fact is that it is the writ of politician—landlord in place of the erstwhile Zamindars which now run in the state. And Bihar has many such incarnations. Even in the present Government, it is reported that there are atleast three Minister each of whom lord over 1000 acres of land.

It is in the context of these existing scenario, that the Bodh-Gaya Mahanth case assumes special significance. There can be no doubt that but for the organised struggle and mass action by the villagers, the land would still have continued to be in the mahanth's hands, no matter what the legislations had to say. Ultimately, the loopholes in the Acts, the bureaucratic bungling and the strength of the landlords-politician combine can always run roughshod over well meaning legislations.

The Mahanth still has, it is learnt, about 20,000 acres scattered in a dozen districts. Moreover there are 253 other such maths and religious trusts—according to Mrs. Krishnama Jagannathan, a Sarvodaya worker who had conducted a study in 1975—in the state of Bihar. But reliable information as to their size of estate is hardly available. Will the Government now act?

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Memories of my Pilgrimage to Sri Hem Kunt Sahib

Chanchal Singh Gadhoke

I feel myself very fortunate blessed by God Almighty in having visited Sri Hem Kunt Sahib—the revered *Taposthan* of "Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji" where he meditated upon God for a long long time. My visit to this holy place not only quenched my thirst of many previous births but added to my love, devotion and faith in God. The visit has given rise to new adventures in my life and I always think of visiting it again and again.

I started the journey to this holy and religious place on 1st October 1981 and returned back to Nagpur on 19th Oct. 81. But this eighteen days' journey has become a memorable one for the rest of my life. In recalling this visit my object is that the readers of Panchbati Sandesh may also be charged with an enthusiasm to pay a visit to this holy spot, as early as possible.

The Tenth Nanak—Sri Guru Gobind Singh, in his autobiography "Vichitra Natak" narrates the story of his previous life as follows:

**"Now I narrate my story,
How I came to this world.
Where I meditated upon God.
stands there Hem Kunt Sahib.
Along with its seven peaks,
Where Panduraj (ancestor of
Pandavas) had
meditated for a long time,
Here I meditated upon Almighty
Lord deeply and reverently
As a result of this rigorous
meditations,
I became one with God.....
The Lord was very happy with
me,
And when He ordered me to
come to this world,
I had little desire to leave the
beautiful surroundings
But I had no option but to fulfill
His will;
And I took birth in the Kalyug
age.**

The place of Sri Hem Kunt Sahib is really a gem in this world. Imagine, how much sacred it would be where Sri Guru Gobind Singh preferred to meditate and became one with God? I was longing to have Darshan of this sacred spot whatever it might cost. And fortunately Satguru gave me an opportunity to make this voyage.

The Visit

We reached Delhi by train and collected at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib (At this sacred Gurdwara situated near the Parliament House, Bhai Lakhi Shah Banjara had cremated the martyred body of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur with utmost affection and devotion, three centuries earlier.) Twenty five buses of pilgrims took off from Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib. Total strength of the pilgrims was more than one thousand. It was a very moving scene. A devoted Sikh invited all the pilgrims for lunch and the dishes served in the langar were so tasty and sweet that we rarely find even in our homes.

At the start of the journey, "Jaikaras" were shouted at a high pitch. It looked as if the entire city was echoing with the *Jaikaras*. After Delhi, we stopped at "Khatauli" where one Gursikh served us tea and sweets. We were overwhelmed by the warm welcome accorded to us at every stop during the whole journey by different people. We really felt as if we were not living in this "Kalyug Age" where selfishness has always prevailed. We started asking ourselves how is it that such kind-hearted and noble people still exist in this world?

The memory of the place, where lunch was served, still lingers in our hearts even today. It was a beautiful carpet of grass specially laid out by nature for welcoming us.

We spend the first night of our journey at Rishikesh. This city is about 1300 ft above sea-level and is situated on the banks of river Ganges. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji had also visited this place during 1st *Udasi* (Itinerary). In this old religious city there are adequate arrangements for lodging and boarding. "Sri Hem Kunt Sahib Management Trust" has also constructed a very beautiful Gurdwara on the main road where there are good arrangements for accommodation, kitchen, bath etc., for the Sikh *Sangat*. The Telephone No. of Gurdwara Sahib is 229.

Appreciation

All the Gurdwaras managed by "Sri Hem Kunt Sahib Management Trust" should be highly appreciated for providing lodging and boarding facilities to the visiting public. "Sri Hem Kunt Divinity Institute" is also functioning under the auspices of Sri Hem Kunt Sahib Management Trust which is imparting religious instructions to the students. Rishikesh is 13 miles away from Haridwar and 28 miles from Dehra Dun. Religious temples and institutions of various sects are a common site here, and this is the last station of Northern Railway.

The second leg of our journey started next morning as we reached Srinagar (Garhwal). This place is 67 miles away from Rishikesh, 3400 ft above sea level and located on the banks of Alakh Nanda river. It is said that Guru Nanak Dev Ji had visited this place during his 1st spiritual journey. The Gurdwara Sahib of Srinagar is also very beautiful and provided us with all the facilities we required.

This place also connects several famous religious places like Badrinath, Rudranath, Kedarnath, Rudar Paryag, Dev Paryag, Karan Paryag, Gupat Kashi, Yamnotri and Gangotri etc. 91 miles away from Srinagar is the famous Hindu religious place—Joshi Math, which is one of the four Maths of Shri Shankaracharya.

Although there are several temples and Dharamshalas in the city, Sri Hem Kunt Sahib Trust has also constructed

"Gurdwara Dusht Daman Sahib" in the main bazar for assisting the pilgrims. "Joshi Math" is 6000 ft above the sea level, and 8 miles away from here is "Laxmi Temple" and hot water springs.

Some miles away from this place is the mountain, a portion of which is said to have been taken by Hanuman to Lanka, in order to bring Lachman back to consciousness.

Third Camp

Our third camp was at "Gobind Ghat", which is also called the entrance to "Sri Hem Kunt Sahib". Gobind Ghat is 170 miles from Rishikesh and 12 miles from Joshi Math. It is a very beautiful and scenic place. Two great rivers namely Hem Ganga and Alakh Nanda converge here. Two miles away from this place is Pandukeshwar and similarly Badrinath Dham stands at the 12th mile stone. Here we find a few cold and hot water springs flowing side by side. The international border of Tibet starts just 4 miles away from Badrinath.

At Gobind Ghat there is a huge Gurdwara building built with the help of Sant Baba Modan Singh ji and where thousands of pilgrims can reside and dine simultaneously. There is a full-fledged dispensary also. The Gurdwara and dispensary are managed by Sri Hem Kunt Sahib Trust like other Gurdwaras. Facilities are provided for depositing excess luggage, cash etc. before starting for "Sri Hem Kunt Sahib". People can also get conveyance facilities like special walking sticks, ponies etc. Special bottles to bring Amrit-Jal from Sri Hem Kunt Sahib are also available at Gobind Ghat. Arrangements are also available for administering Amrit to the pilgrims at Gurdwara Gobind Ghat. Although there is not much necessity to carry extra woollen clothes in the months of June, or July, the weather becomes extremely cold in September. One must wear sufficient woollen garments to protect oneself against cold.

From Gobind Ghat onwards, the journey starts with the snow clad mountains converging on all sides as far as one can see. As one starts ascending the mountains, there is a feeling of deep spiritual exultation throughout. After Gobind Ghat, we reached Gobind Dham Gurdwara, which is about 12 miles away from Gobind Ghat and 10,400 ft. above sea level. The journey from Gobind Ghat to Gobind Dham usually takes 5 to 6 hours for a fit person, but we covered this dangerous and risky track in 8 hours.

During the journey we found "Ek Onkar-Satnam—Sri Waheguru Ji" written on various rocks on both the sides of the road and singing "Satnam Waheguru" again and again helped in consoling the pilgrims, to forget the

difficulties of the journey and tread the path smilingly.

During this journey we felt as if the relationships of man, like father, mother, daughter, son etc were all fading out of our minds and everyone was in communion with "Satnam Waheguru". Before leaving Gobind Ghat, one Gur-Sikh presented apples to everybody and these apples helped us a lot during the journey.

The weather at the last phase of the journey i.e. Gobind Dham was almost unbearable. The icy-cold wind blew viciously. But the pilgrims seemed to be unmindful of it. Instead they were singing "Satnam Waheguru" and reciting "Dham Guru Gobind Singh" to face the nature's challenge. Although one could avail the facility of a tourist rest house or a forest guest house at Gobind Dham, the pilgrims preferred to stay at the Gurdwara where everybody was provided with good accommodation and "Guru Ka Langar" without any distinction of caste, colour or creed. Since there is too much cold at Gobind Dham, the pilgrims were issued woollen blankets—as many as they desired; by the Gurdwara management.

Two miles away from Gurdwara Gobind Dham lies the world famous "Valley of Flowers". In the variety, smell and beauty of flowers, this valley has no equal in the entire world. When we visited the flowering valley, we were told that one European lady named James Margaret was so much impressed by the beauty of the flowers that instead of going back, she spent her remaining life in the valley itself, collecting and smelling the wondrous flowers. The place is 12000 ft. above the sea level and covered entirely with beautiful flowers of different colours.

That night we spent at Gobind Dham Gurdwara. In the morning we started the journey again. The ultimate distance between Gobind Dham and Sri Hem Kunt Sahib is 3½ miles. Because of the steep ascent, the last leg of the journey was difficult but most interesting. A great deal of stamina is however required to cover this small distance.

The chilly winds were weakening everyone's strength and determination. Everybody was concentrating on each step and finally when we saw the "Nishan Sahib" of Sri Hem Kunt Sahib, we were over-joyed. Our mind was completely absorbed in spiritual ecstasy. Everyone was seen applauding with joyful cries of "Sat Sri Akal".

Everybody was in the grip of great spiritual elation and the hawk of Guru Gobind Singh Ji was seen hovering and welcoming the devotees coming to the Gurdwara for "Guru-Ka-darshan". The pilgrim in return were joyfully crying "Deh Darshan Guru Mere", and finally we reached our destination 'Hem Kunt

Sahib Gurdwara'.

The sight that confronted our eyes at Hem Kunt Sahib and the spiritual impact it created is beyond description. One felt the nearness of God, in complete communion with nature. It also seemed as if all our desires of this world as well as of the next had been realised. Some of the people were so excited on reaching the pious place that they were unable to talk to their colleagues.

On the sides of the Gurdwara were huge icy-mountains giving us a "Heaven On Earth"—sight. Facing the "Gurdwara Hem Kunt" is the sacred 'Sarover'—the most spiritual and healing pool for the suffering mankind. It is believed that any person having an incurable disease is healed by a dip in this holy pool.

This worth visiting place is 15210 ft. above sea-level. The construction work of a two story beautiful Gurdwara building is in progress. The platform of the Gurdwara is built 11 ft. above the ground level.

The freezing temperature compelled every one to seek cover as early as possible. It was impossible to put your hands in the icy cold water of the Sarover for more than a few minutes.

But soon by the grace of the 'Almighty', sunlight crept in, providing a warm blanket and everybody was seen uttering "Almighty's Name" and having a quick dip into the Sarover. Everybody felt refreshed and relieved of his fatigue. I also got an opportunity to take a dip in the Sarover and fulfilled my long standing desire.

I also wanted to have a round of the holy Sarover, but when I discussed it with some companions, everyone cautioned me from taking the risk, as the path was very dangerous and slippery. But after some hesitation, five persons accompanied me in this adventurous and risky journey. Our feet started slipping here and there but we completed this arduous task in 2½ hours against heavy odds with a smile on our faces.

Evening time was approaching near and we started girding up our loins for the return journey to Gobind Dham. It is very difficult to spend the night at Sri Hem Kunt Sahib due to the insufficiency of oxygen.

Regarding this journey, one instance is worth mentioning. While going from Gobind Ghat to "Sri Hem Kunt Sahib", my elder sister slipped off from the path, and was thrown some hundred feet below. Everybody suddenly went pale and a feeling of depression could easily be seen on the faces. The fall really left no chance of her survival, but to our astonishment and joy she was saved without even a scratch on her body. It so happened that while falling, she chanced to collide with a tree. She tightly held one of the branches of the tree, and this saved her life. This incident was certainly a miracle, an act of divine grace for our family.

Two Kabuli-Sikhs who were about 90 years old blessed me on the forehead and I thought as if I really had a blessing from my father from whom I had been separated since my childhood.

Not By Military Alone

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opposing and embarrassing India. But in their case, one cannot rule out the tide turning against India because under no circumstances can India leave the entire disputes to be settled by the Sri Lanka government.

If the Central Government of New Delhi does so, it will make the people of Tamil Nadu hostile to it. New Delhi cannot afford it. And its indirect repercussions will be to strengthen the Punjabi extremists. The world public opinion will also turn critical of India. This is not a problem which can be solved by the military alone.

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The statemanship of the highest order is called for. After having gone there, India will have to promote conciliation and negotiation between the Tamils and the Sri Lanka government. The recent agreement itself was the result of the spirit of meditation India had displayed. But it is unfortunate that it had to use force to implement it. And it has not fully succeeded by force also.

Tamils and the Sri Lanka government. The recent agreement itself was the result of the spirit of mediation India had displayed. But it is unfortunate that it had to use force to implement it. And it has not fully succeeded by force also.

Now the Indian government itself will have to make concessions to others and persuade them to make

concessions to each other. During the Korean war General MacArthur said that there was no alternative to victory in a war. President Truman had to dismiss him and search for other methods of settlement. And finally when the agreement was reached there, India became the Chairman of the United Nations Commission. And now India will have to search for a solution outside the military field.

The leaders of India will have to accept the reality that India cannot win the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Any way it was not their aim. That is why our armed forces were referred to as the "peace keeping force". The Indian Army is functioning under many constraints. They are fighting a restrained war while the Tamil militants have no much restraint. There is no political will in India to fight to the finish in Sri Lanka. It is,

therefore, the duty of the diplomats to search for a solution there.

The area of domestic jurisdiction had shrunk when India had at first supplied medicines and food to the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. This trend was further strengthened when the Indian peace keeping forces had to operate on such a large scale in Sri Lanka. But so far it was

India factor in Third World setback

United Nations, Jan 12: India's "internal setbacks" are cited as a factor for slow-down of economic growth in developing countries in 1987 by a United Nations report which warns of serious risk of a world-wide recession in the months ahead.

In an end-of-year forecast released here today, UN experts painted a grim picture of international economy, saying that it was "precariously unstable." There is a serious risk of recession in 1988, they said.

A summary of the report released here does not explain which "internal setbacks" in India contributed to the slow-down. Brazil was bracketed with India in this respect.

"Stagnation in the energy-exporting countries and internal setbacks in India and Brazil, two of the most populous countries, were deemed responsible for this year's slow-down in developing countries," the report said.

China continued to have one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the report said, adding that its economy grew at a rate of 10 per cent, faster than 7.4 per cent achieved in 1986 and that it is expected to grow by 8 per cent in 1988.

The experts said that economic growth slowed world-wide in 1987 and is expected to decelerate further next year, continuing a pattern of decline which began in the early 80's "Some countries will do better than others but

prospects for the poorest developing countries are disturbing," they added.

The figures contained in the report revise downwards the UN mid-year estimates of growth for 1988 following markets, which highlighted the obstacles to implementing concerned policies to manage global economy.

The report emphasises that confidence and stability in the economy must be restored if a world-wide recession is to be averted. "World output will grow by three per cent, lower than in the past two years. The developed market economies will expand by two per cent and international trade will grow at a sluggish three per cent," it added.

The experts said that in 1987 growth of output and income slowed in all major groups—developed market economies, developing countries and centrally-planned economies of Eastern Europe.

The economic interdependence of countries worldwide meant that lower growth in the industrialised nations and slower expansion of world trade adversely affected the growth of developing countries which in turn dampened expansion in the industrialised nations, they said.

They expressed the view that the October turmoil in the financial market was superimposed on, and prompted by,

long-term problems underlying international economy.

In developing countries, debt problems remained unresolved and continued to put pressure on balance-of-payments and to depress living standards.

"The international financial system and the global economy remained vulnerable to new shocks and to the possibility of a world-wide recession in the coming months," the report said.

It said that regional diversity in the growth rates of developing countries continued in 1987. In south-east Asia, growth reached 4.7 per cent, similar to the rate achieved in 1981-85 whereas the growth in West Asia was 1.1 per cent and only 0.3 per cent in Africa.

The growth of net material production slowed to 3.2 per cent from 4.6 per cent in the year before.

The growth in the developed market economies was 2.7 per cent in 1987, about the same as in the preceding year, this is expected to drop to two per cent in 1988.

Commenting on the report, the UN secretary-general, Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar said that the governments of countries that most influenced the world economy had a special responsibility to take urgent action to reduce the present imbalances and the "corrosive instability" in exchange markets and interest markets.

confined to South Asia where India was their foremost power. But it will not be confined to this region if the armed conflicts

continue there indefinitely. That is why India should try to stop the armed conflict. It is often said that you need two

hands to clap. This is true of stopping the armed conflicts also. The other side should also be willing to stop. □□



Not By Military Alone

K.P. Karunakaran

The recent history of military conflicts reveals that big Powers had not often emerged as the victors because they did not have the political will to continue the armed action while their opponents had it. India's case in Sri Lanka may not be an exception.

In Sri Lanka India is faced with a new challenge to her foreign policy. In the years immediately following the achievement of her independence, she was confronted by the Super Powers when she decided to follow an independent foreign policy. The Indian Government withstood the strain very well and in the course of a few years, it could even develop a lobby of more than a hundred states with their non-alignment policies.

In the conflicts with Pakistan, both military and political, India was not the loser, she won the "war" against Portugal in Goa. She lost the battles with China militarily, but was not eclipsed by her politically. Now she is faced with a new situation in Sri Lanka. Will she win there? Militarily, she has the power to win. But what will be the price she will have to pay there—both militarily and economically? Another important question is this: Have the people of India, taken as a whole, and their representative political leaders, the political will to win the battles in Sri Lanka?

Vietnam and other cases

Vietnam is the class in case of modern times, when a Super Power like the U.S. could not have the ultimate victory. Finally, the U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, had to satisfy himself with the Nobel Prize for peace which he had to share with the Vietnamese leader.

It is significant that Kissinger himself had explained the difficulty of a state like the U.S. fighting against the insurgents of Vietnam. In his own words, if the guerrillas do not lose, they win, but if the army of a modern state does not win, it loses. Both the Chinese Communists and the Vietnamese, under Ho Chin Minh, worked on this concept with remarkable damage to their enemies. This was also

true of the Algerians and the Tunisians who fought against the French.

Many detailed and considerable studies have revealed that the Governments and the political leaders of the metropolitan countries were faced with another problem. The people at home had no political will to continue the war. They realised that their security was not threatened and that there was no possibility of the insurgents invading them on their territory. For instance, the Vietnamese could not invade the U.S. That was also true of the Algerians in relation to France. All these countries had no more economic stakes in these small countries. This is true of Afghanistan also where, again like other big powers, the USSR is losing financially by trying to hold on to the small country.

So after a stage, with the increasing loss of manpower and money, the public opinion in these big countries turned against the continuation of the military operations. To the insurgents, who use extensive guerrilla tactics, the case is different. To them it is a life and death struggle. They think that everything is at stake. The world public opinion also gradually supports them.

The Indian position is unique. She had no colonial part in Sri Lanka as France had in Algeria and Tunisia. Unlike the US or the USSR, India is not a Super Power with strategic interests in Vietnam or in Afghanistan, India's traditional hostile neighbours like China or Pakistan are still not in the defence picture of Sri Lanka.

In fact India was primarily interested in the Tamils of that country. And it is with them she is having military encounters now.

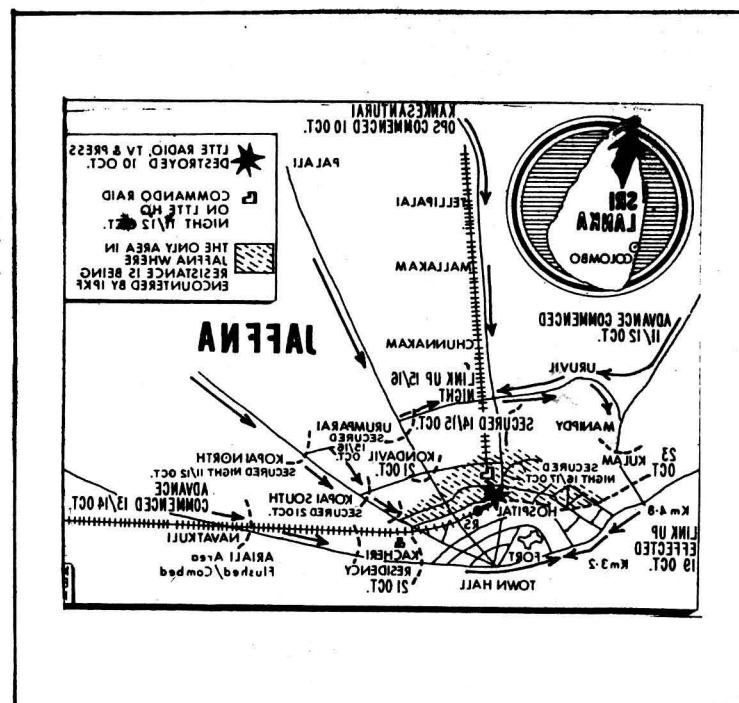
And within India, only the people of Tamil Nadu are primarily interested in the Sri Lanka Tamils. And the policy makers of New Delhi of course know that India has some strategic interests there. And they do not want other powers to be involved in Sri Lanka. But the people of India, in general, do not understand the strategic questions. There is a possibility that they will ask for the

discontinuation of the military and peace-keeping operations if it means considerable loss of money and men to India.

The Challenge before India

It is under these circumstances that the Indian Government has to formulate its policies and to implement them. India cannot respond to this challenge by military alone. Now the Indian government's forces are antagonizing the Tamil militants. The Sinhalese government is at least not

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